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ABSTRACT

This document contains 14 papers on the purposes and traditions, challenges and dilemmas, and new approaches and issues in liberal adult education. The following papers are included: "Introduction" (Duke); "Decus et Tutamen: Liberal Adult Education" (Thomas); "Tradition in British University Adult Education and the WEA [Workers' Educational Association]" (Fieldhouse); "The WEA and Liberal Adult Education" (Ross); "Liberal Adult Education as Catalyst for Change: Everett Dean Martin and the American Association for Adult Education" (Day); "Liberal Adult Education and the Liberation of Adults" (Shimada); "Vocationalism, Competence and Dewey's Liberalism" (Hyland); "Contractualism: The Modern Alternative to Liberal Adult Education in the Australian University" (Bagnall); "The Liberal Tradition: How Liberal? Adult Education, the Arts and Multiculturalism" (Jones); "Accreditation: The Dilemma of Liberal Adult Education" (Benn); "Women's Education in Japan" (Yamamoto); "Liberal Adult Education: A Contemporary Approach" (McIntosh); "Adult Education from Below: Notes from a Participatory Action Research Project" (Schratz); "Lifelong Education a Necessity" (Gestrelius); and "Postscript--The Wadham Conversation" (Duke). (MN)

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Continuing Education Research Centre
Department of Continuing Education
University of Warwick

A Discussion Paper in Continuing Education
Number 4

LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION- PERSPECTIVES AND PROJECTS

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INTRODUCTION

Chris Duke

Gerald Normie, an Associate Fellow of the University of Warwick Department of Continuing Education, convened a Warwick international conference in the form of a Symposium on Liberal Adult Education at his old College, Wadham, at that well-known centre of liberal education, the University of Oxford, 13–16 July 1992. His efforts in putting together the event from which this volume is drawn are much appreciated.

Some of the papers presented at that meeting form the basis of this volume. They have been regrouped around themes not necessarily manifest when the conference was conceived. Not all the papers given at Oxford are included here. What does appear is not necessarily as it was presented then. In particular, ideas in papers by Bernadette Murphy and Tom Steele contributed significantly to the symposium but the papers are not included, since they have appeared in another publication already.(1)

Another presentation not featured here was by Janet Solinger, Director of the Resident Associate Program of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Her theme, the Arts and Adult Education, is scheduled as the theme for the next similar Oxford–based Warwick international conference in 1993. Looking back, the 1991 conference at Somerville College yielded a volume on Residential Adult Education.(2)

Important as are the links between the Arts and Adult Education, and the continuation of the Residential Adult Education tradition, nothing could be more significant, or topical, at least in Britain but perhaps also much more widely, as 1992 draws to a close, than the subject of liberal adult education. The optimism which swept the world with the disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the reduction of nuclear threat has at least partly given way to a new pessimism – the fear of a new, especially Eurocentric, barbarism. Within Britain, but not perhaps in Britain alone, as some of the papers in this volume show, liberal values and traditions are threatened by the strident demands of the economy and its spokespersons – economic competitiveness or economic recovery – and education is largely equated with occupational skilling under such terms as VET – vocationally education and training. At the year's end the Higher Education Funding Council for England issued a Continuing Education Consultation Paper (3) which many perceived as spelling the demise of the liberal adult education tradition in British universities – the bed in which much of this tradition and work was nurtured and tended for export through half the twentieth century.

The papers which follow deserve to be read both for their topicality but also for the different ways in which they address abiding themes. It seemed appropriate to group them round the three themes under which as section headings they now appear:

Old Values – Purposes and Traditions
Challenges and Dilemmas
New Approaches, New Questions.

Hopefully the respective authors, whose affiliations are listed at the end of the volume, will not feel that the juxtapositions have done injustice to their messages.

References

1 Bernadette Murphy "Adult education and the changing research context" (pp 60–63) and Tom Steele "Lessons in citizenship: university adult education and modernity" (pp 64–66), in Nod Miller and Linden West (eds), 1992, Changing Culture and Adult Education, Papers from the SCUTREA Annual Conference, Canterbury, SCUTREA, University of Kent.

2 John Field and Gerald Normie (eds), 1991 Residential Adult Education Trends and Prospects. Discussion Paper in Continuing Education Number 3, Warwick, CERC, University of Warwick.

3 Higher Education Funding Council, England, 1992, Continuing Education Policy Review (Consultation Paper) Bristol, HEFCE

I OLD VALUES – PURPOSES AND TRADITIONS

DECUS ET TUTAMEN:
LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION(1)

Geoffrey Thomas

The opportunity this conference gives to reflect on the future of liberal adult education is timely. For the past decade the emphasis in British education has increasingly shifted toward the training needs of both younger and older people and towards vocationalism generally. Given the increased attention being paid to the economic competitiveness of the country, to the dominance of market mechanisms in most aspects of our daily lives, the government's concern to ensure that the nation's workforce is well equipped for the tasks in hand is understandable. However, as this audience does not need reminding, total concentration on the vocational/training needs of our young people and of our population generally, neglects those rich areas of life and living which have traditionally been an integral part of the educational provision of civilized nations for many centuries.

My qualification for introducing our discussions of liberal adult education is based not so much on any special expertise or insight as on experience over the past 25 years or so. During these years I have had the pleasure and privilege of working in university adult education, most particularly in departments which have placed high value on their role as providers of liberal adult education. I am happy to say that, although the work of the Department for Continuing Education in Oxford now embraces a very wide range of activities, including high-level vocational courses, courses for professional groups etc., the greatest part of its work is still recognisable as stemming from the extra-mural roots of the Department. The remarks which follow, on what a liberal education might comprise and why it may be important, will, I hope, provide a framework for the much more substantial discussion and papers which will follow, or will at least raise some points which may be taken up during the rest of the proceedings.

It may be useful to begin with definitions. Although each of the three terms in our title could be and has been the subject of voluminous debate, for present purposes let me offer simple interpretations of each.

> By liberal I mean simply non-professional, non-technical and non-vocational. (In some contexts it also means non-accredited, and I hope that the connotation can be discussed at some stage in the Conference.)
>
> The term adult we will take as meaning someone who has grown up. (It literally means someone who has stopped being adolescent. However, given the adolescent behaviour to which all of us are doubtless prone from time to time we had better not dwell on the literal definition for too long.)
>
> How may we define education in a brief, but adequate way? For my purpose I will simply refer to it as the set of processes whereby we share, develop and communicate between ourselves, especially between the generations, the skills, knowledge and loyalties to which we have come to attach importance.(2)

If we accept these definitions, then the theme for our conference is concerned with educating adults in ways which complement the education and training they need for vocational purposes. This is not to assume that there is necessarily a sharp distinction between vocational and non-vocational in educational terms, but to suggest that we concentrate on those elements of education which might commonly be pursued whether a man or woman is a teacher or a taxi driver, a dressmaker or a dentist, a butcher or a banker. We may also get the sense of our topic by reverting to the origin of the term liberal meaning free, by talking about the education that people might enjoy or find beneficial when they are "free" from the pre-occupations of job or career. Thus we are concerned with men and women when they are living, but not necessarily earning a living. Our question then comes down to what skills, knowledge and loyalties we might wish to see develop through a liberal education. The terms skills and knowledge are self-explanatory, but by loyalties I mean the values, beliefs, social conventions and the like, which guide our ways of living and which mark out our culture from others.

Were we to be sitting in Oxford several centuries ago with matters of education on our agenda, then we might have been discussing a liberal education in terms of those two major components in the classical pattern of education, the trivium and the quadrivium. We could in fact make considerable progress by discussing the extent to which the desirable knowledge and skills which we wished to encourage were represented by the subjects covered within the trivium - grammar, rhetoric and logic, and the quadrivium - astronomy, music, geometry and arithmetic. These subjects were known in fact as the seven liberal arts.

In today's terms what skills might we seek to develop through liberal education? This is a question which I know will be addressed in the papers that follow, but clear candidates would include the skills of analysis and of thinking and judging generally, skills of communication, skills of cooperation and so on. Perhaps most important would be our aim to transmit the skill of learning itself. There is no doubt that an education which has not communicated the value, pleasure and skill of continuing one's education is a deficient one.

What of knowledge? What might be the modern day equivalent in the place of astronomy or geometry in the latter day quadrivium? How do we tackle such a formidable question? What might we put forward as worthwhile content for our contemporary liberal adult education? Where do we start our discussions of the curriculum? Some notable attempts have been made, of course. Let me refer to two recent exercises, one in the United States and one in this country. Both refer to the establishment of a curriculum for young people, but as the distinction between initial and adult education becomes blurred, many of the same principles apply in our field also.

Ten years ago Professor E. D. Hirsch Jr., of the University of Virginia, started setting out his ideas on cultural literacy. These developed into the publication of Cultural Literacy in 1987, which argued that without access to certain items of basic information, certain facts, a certain range of knowledge, American young people would find themselves unable properly to function in the society of which they were a part.(3)

As Hirsch wrote in his preface, "to be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world. The breadth of that information is great, extending over the major domains of human activity from sports to science." In an appendix to this ambitious and influential book, Hirsch listed 5,000 or so names, concepts, literary references etc. which make up the intellectual stock-in-trade of the "literate" American. It is of course easy to question this approach, and even easier to question detailed aspects of the listings. (For my part, for example, I am concerned with the way that the scientific terms and concepts have been identified – on a somewhat different basis from that used in compiling the rest of the list.) However, I strongly recommend the book to you and suggest that it may be a useful basis for discussing the "knowledge" components of liberal education.

The second attempt to deal in an explicit way with the content of education to which I want to refer comes from the United Kingdom. In this country during the last two years, a National Curriculum has been introduced for all of Britain's schools. This lays down a framework for the principal subjects taught in our primary and secondary schools and sets out those aspects of each subject which the Department for Education regards as important for children and young people to know at each stage in their schooling. It offers advice on skills and content but with a stronger emphasis on factual information and knowledge than some of its critics think desirable.(4)

In commending both these discussions as being of relevance to our theme, let me reiterate an obvious point, but one which is sometimes missed when discussions of the content of education are entered into: that the manner in which one learns is of course as important as what one learns.

For my part, in teaching the sciences to adults, usually with a non-vocational interest, I have seen one of my main objectives as enabling the student to acquire a mental map of any particular domain of human interest. In this approach, detailed information is less important than how ideas relate to each other and fit into the broad context of our understanding of domains of knowledge, whether we are talking about political systems, the structure of the physical world, or great movements in the creative arts etc.

When we come to consider a "justification" for liberal adult education, we are faced with the prospect of spelling out arguments which many people would regard as obvious, and which others would see as demanding extensive treatment. Some years ago I encountered a similar task in connection with research on the public understanding of science. In 1988 Oxford colleagues and I conducted a national survey of the place of science in the public mind in the United Kingdom, a piece of research which produced striking results.(5) The quantitative work was preceded by a discussion of the reasons <u>why</u> the public understanding of science might be regarded as important. As part of this exercise we reviewed the literature on the public understanding of science which had been published in the United Kingdom and the United States from the 1950's onwards.(6) It was interesting to see the near-universal agreement that more understanding was a Good Thing, but also to note the wide range of arguments put forward to support it. We were able to point to ten distinct reasons put forward by different people at different times for increasing the

public understanding of science. It may be of interest to rehearse a few of those arguments now because some of them, though certainly not all, may be helpful to us in thinking about our advocacy of liberal adult education. I will confine myself to seven strands of argument, and will briefly refer to them in terms of the putative benefits that might derive in each case.

i) First, numerous advocates of the greater understanding (of science) based their case on the practical benefits which derive to individuals eg. in terms of health, diet, energy usage, their general role as parents, consumers etc.

ii) Another argument is based on the improvement in the quality of our public policy discussions which would follow if greater levels of understanding (of science and technology) were achievable. Areas in which this was thought to be especially relevant included energy production (the nuclear debate), environmental issues, etc.

iii) An argument based on the quality of our democracy was often to be found; this was clearly linked to (ii). The argument is that without a better-informed and educated public, the democratic processes on which our governance is based would be illusory. In order for each of us to be better citizens we need to be better informed on the major issues of the day, in the case of our area of research on issues dealing with scientific and technical questions.

iv) There is also a social dimension to be found in some of these arguments, albeit closely related to those referred to above. Here the point, made by Margaret Mead amongst others, was that it would be dangerous for our society were important decisions to be left to small, elite groups with whom the rest of us were not in communication. In the case of science and technology the elite groups would be the high priests of scientific and technological expertise, living in a world isolated from the rest of us who would be reduced to the role of techno-peasants not able to communicate with or understand those who play such a large part in shaping our lives.

v) Inevitably, many who advocated the greater public understanding of science based their arguments on economics. Here, the general line was that in order for nations to be competitive in the international market place for producing goods and services, they needed to be increasingly efficient, sophisticated and innovative. This would crucially depend on the quality of the work force. The health of a technologically progressive work force would in turn depend on a general climate in which science and technology were widely understood and respected. Thus, for a country like Britain, greater public understanding of science and technology would be prerequisites for economic success.

vi) You will be relieved to know that prominent amongst the arguments for seeking to improve the public understanding of science were those based on the sheer aesthetic and intellectual benefits which would follow. The general point is that the picture that modern science paints of the physical world and of the nature of life itself is one of the great achievements of the human mind and that those

who are denied access to it are missing out on one of the greatest aesthetic and intellectual pleasures known to human kind.

vii) The last point I will refer to here relates to the benefits to science itself which would derive from greater public understanding. Here the assumption made was that if only people understood science better they would hold it in higher regard, would hold scientists in greater respect, and would be more likely to vote for more science activity. This is an assumption, of course, but one which does have some evidence to support it – those with a greater understanding of science do tend to be more supportive of it than those with less understanding. We can transfer this argument to our field of liberal adult education quite readily, I think, because I hope that those of us who have had the advantage of a liberal education are amongst its strongest advocates.

Let me stress that this list was drawn up for a different purpose, but it may be instructive to us in thinking about why we are advocates for a liberal adult education, should we ever need to put forward a defence. What, in our field, are the corresponding benefits?

I referred earlier to the role of education in developing skills, knowledge and loyalties, and I am conscious that I have not referred to the last of these. Neither shall I here – the topic is too large and too important simply to be touched on. Let me simply say that one of the main benefits derived from liberal adult education must surely be in its enablement of the exploration of our beliefs, our ideas of social purpose, the nature of our relationships with each other, and so on. Rather than indulge in inadequate flights of rhetoric on these topics, let me conclude with two quotations. One will illustrate, perhaps unfairly, the turn of mind of a fine and worthy man, but one who has not benefitted from the sort of liberal education that we are here to discuss. The other, in contrast, holds out the ideals of what a product of a liberal eduction might represent.

My first quotation is from that brilliant and remarkable novel The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguor.(7) Those of you who know it will recall that the protagonist is Stevens, a butler approaching retirement, who shares with us some of the course of his life in service. In doing so he reveals himself as a tragic figure, a casualty of the class system in Britain, and, although an immensely dignified man, a man also who is deferential to the point of self–extinction. In the passage which follows, Stevens is musing on a conversation he has recently had – a conversation which has confronted him with ideas which are unfamiliar to him, and which clearly trouble him.

> ... there are perhaps one or two other aspects to this evening's events which warrant a few moments' thought – if only because otherwise they may come to niggle one throughout the coming days. For instance, there is the matter of Mr. Harry Smith's pronouncements on the nature of 'dignity'. There is surely little in his statements that merits serious consideration. Of course, one has to allow that Mr. Harry Smith was employing the word 'dignity' in a quite different sense altogether from my own understanding of it. Even so, even taken on their own terms, his statements were, surely, far too idealistic, far too

theoretical, to deserve respect. Up to a point, no doubt, there is some truth in what he says: in a country such as ours, people may indeed have a certain duty to think about great affairs and form their opinions. But life being what it is, how can ordinary people truly be expected to have 'strong opinions' on all manner of things – as Mr. Harry Smith rather fancifully claims the villagers here do? And not only are these expectations unrealistic, I rather doubt if they are even desirable. There is, after all, a real limit to how much ordinary people can learn and know, and to demand that each and every one of them contribute 'strong opinions' to the great debates of the nation cannot, surely, be wise. It is, in any case, absurd that anyone should presume to define a person's 'dignity' in these terms.

By way of contrast, my second quotation is one which is obligatory in any conference held in Oxford on liberal education, and is of course from John Henry (Cardinal) Newman.(8) I paraphrase only slightly Newman's list of the qualities to be derived from a proper (ie liberal) university education, and leave it with you as another starting–point for our discussions.

> ... It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle the skein of thought to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. He knows when to speak and when to be silent.

Notes

(1) Decus et tutamen is a quotation from Vergil familiar to even the most casual student of British coinage – it is inscribed on the milled edge of the British £1 coins. Its translation could be taken as a rallying cry for advocates of liberal education: "an adornment and a defence".

(2) This formulation can be traced back to Hook, S., in Daedalus, 88, 1, 7–24 (1959), a special issue on Education in the Age of Science.

(3) Hirsch, E.D. Jr., Cultural Literacy New York, Houghton Mifflin (1987).

(4) For a good introduction to the National Curriculum and other features of the 1988 Education Reform Act see Maclure, S., Education Reformed, London, Hodder and Stoughton (1988)

(5) Durant, J.R., Evans, G., and Thomas, G.P. Nature, 340, 11–14 (1989).

(6) Thomas, G.P. and Durant, J.R., in Scientific Literacy Papers, Oxford University Department for External Studies, 1–14, (1987).

(7) Ishiguor, K., The Remains of the Day, Faber and Faber, London (1989).

(8) Newman, J.H, The Scope and Nature of University Education pp. 171–2, Dent, London (1915) (Everyman edition).

I am grateful to Mr. K. Ishiguro and Messrs. Faber and Faber for their kind permission to reprint the passage from The Remains of the Day.

2

TRADITION IN BRITISH UNIVERSITY ADULT EDUCATION AND THE WEA

Roger Fieldhouse

Throughout much of the twentieth century British universities and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) have provided a particular brand of adult education, separate from but complementary to that offered by the local education authorities. These 'Responsible Bodies' (as they became known) formed a closely knit national network, sharing a common purpose and common ideals. They conceived of themselves, and came to be regarded, as 'the Adult Education Movement'. A movement needs a heart, a purpose, a set of values, a belief system. This was derived very largely from the notion of liberalism as it was applied to education in Britain. Liberalism was certainly not peculiar to adult education, but the British Adult Education Movement, from its early days and for much of its history, was particularly wedded to its liberal heritage. Its particular responsibility was believed to be the provision of liberal adult education (as opposed to whatever local education authorities did).

In 1985 I summarised this set of values in the introduction to a book on *Adult Education and the Cold War.*

> The notion of 'liberalism' in English adult education implies a democratic, dialectical and non-utilitarian approach. It is democratic rather than authoritarian, with the students enjoying the right to choose what and how they study. The class is treated more as a mutual exploration of the subject than a one-way transmission of a body of knowledge from 'expert' lecturer to ignorant students. It is dialectical rather than propagandist, with a total freedom of discussion of all subjects. And it is non-utilitarian, non-vocational in that it is concerned with the education of the individual either for personal intellectual advancement or to make the individual a better-educated citizen. This liberal education is thus concerned with developing the students' critical faculties and their ability to question all existing assumptions and to enable them to formulate, or at least understand, alternative interpretations. No issues or positions should be exempt from this rigorous and critical analysis. This process should open out and indeed challenge the students' conceptions of their own environment, widen their experience and understanding, and thereby increase their awareness of alternative conceptions.
>
> In English adult education, this notion of liberalism has encompassed more than mere liberal individualism. It has also included the collectivist social purpose dynamic ... providing individuals with the knowledge which they can use collectively to change society if they so wish, and particularly equipping members of the working class with the intellectual tools to play a full role in a democratic society or to challenge the inequalities and injustices of society in order to bring about radical social change.
>
> But sometimes it has been doubted whether such education can be objective

because it does not provide, or even aim to provide, the students with 'absolute truth'. However, with a more general recognition of the inevitable subjectivity of teaching (derived from the teacher's ignorance, prejudices and selectivity) this definition of objectivity has come to be seen as something of a shibboleth. Of course, in adult education, as in other forms of education, many teachers have regarded certain attitudes as 'common-sense' and therefore objectively 'true' and this common-sense 'objectivity' has sometimes led to a politically biased form of teaching, tolerant and even encouraging of certain attitudes and beliefs, but restricting and inhibiting of others. True objectivity in the context of liberal adult education is not so much concerned with content as with the method of teaching. It is concerned with giving people access to the arguments and helping them to make up their own minds: it is a tentative, provisional and undogmatic approach: it is an openness of mind and a readiness to listen attentively to what other people are saying: it is the avoidance of preaching any specific attitudes of beliefs: it is the desire to develop students' powers of independent judgement and a conviction that 'the process of teaching is not confused with the process of winning souls for God, liberalism or the revolution'. The real measure of objectivity is not one of 'absolute truth' but of a genuine dialectical process. This is a definition compatible with, and in many ways synonymous with, the democratic and dialectical tradition of liberal adult education. It does not require that students should be led away from social commitment into a sterile neutrality, but that they should seek 'praxis' (the interaction of theory and reality), and that their action should be informed by education and based on thinking. In this sense, social purpose and political commitment are not contrary to the liberal tradition or objectivity.

But this raises the question whether those who want to change society can expect to do so within a state-funded educational system such as the English Responsible Bodies. Is the state likely to grant-aid a subversive, or even deviant, organisation? Is it more likely that 'capitalism, like all other systems of domination ... requires the containment of pressure from below', and that adult education provides a valuable means of containment?

In recent years this view has become widespread. There is now a wealth of opinion to support the view that English adult education is sociologically confined to maintaining an existing liberal culture, that is 'used to legitimate an ideological commitment ... to the *status quo* and that 'as (it) was funded by the national government, then its fortunes depended upon how that government perceived national needs'.

However, in 1985 I also concluded an article on 'Conformity and Contradiction in English Responsible Body Adult Education' with the statement that:

An educational system cannot necessarily be confined within the limits that are laid down for it. The dialectical process of liberal education must permit all arguments and ideas to be expressed and the best and most powerful to triumph. This means that it is always possible for an ideologically unorthodox perspective to challenge the *status quo*, raise the political consciousness of the

students, win the argument, and equip and encourage people to pursue a social purpose very different from the one favoured by the educational providers. It is this Socratic approach – dialectic rather than indoctrinating – that will bring ideological change. 'A tutor can only be a midwife –to help people to develop their own ideas. It is only ideas that you reach by your own process of thinking, however much you have been stimulated by others, that are any good to you.' It is here, within the very kernel of liberalism, that one finds its central paradoxical contradiction – that it must ultimately make room for ideas and an ideology whose strength and power may break its bounds, and eradicate the false consciousness of bourgeois society. With its close affinity to the mainstream British liberal tradition, the adult education movement shared this central contradiction.

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3 THE WEA AND LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION

Richard Ross

Liberal Education

There is no one, clear definition of the term 'liberal'. However, in the United Kingdom 'liberal' has a number of connotations. It implies a belief in incremental, rather than radical, changes in society; in progress through reform and not revolution; in individuals seeking to gain more knowledge and understanding of society, rather than trying to change it through collective action.

If 'liberal' is difficult to define then 'liberal education' is even more so. Today, as I shall argue, the term serves to confuse rather than enlighten.

I suspect that this was always so. In 1918 the WEA published an Education Year Book. In the preface George Bernard Shaw contrasts liberal education with technical education. His main concern is with what should be taught in schools and he writes, "I do not think that liberal education, which is really recreation, can ever be made the subject of compulsory instruction". The use of the term 'recreation' seems to make Shaw's definition of liberal education similar to that in the 1991 White Paper, 'Education and Training for the 21st Century'.

However there are differences. According to Shaw technical education is "a qualification for living in society". It includes mathematics, science, civic education and political education, which encompasses law, industrial democracy and "socialism". Technical education "justifies itself by its results", whether or not students are interested in it. It must be a compulsory part of the school curriculum. Liberal education, on the other hand, must be voluntary. It 'cannot be acquired without interest and pleasure'. So compulsory Shakespeare or music cannot form part of technical education.

The 1918 Year Book also contains contributions by S.G.Hobson and Viscount Haldane. Hobson argues along much the same lines as Shaw: that technical education should be kept separate from liberal education. Hobson, more clearly than Shaw, equates liberal education with the humanities. Haldane, in contrast, argues that technical education, (by which he means science) and liberal education (the humanities) should both be taught, as "knowledge is one and indivisible".

Liberal Adult Education Today

There does, therefore, seem to be a long-standing division between 'liberal education' on the one hand, and 'technical' or 'scientific' education on the other. However definitions of all these terms vary, although there is a general assumption that liberal equates with the humanities.
Today the term 'liberal education' is used in an even greater variety of ways. The equivalence with the humanities is still there, but humanities can encompass some or all of arts, politics, economics, law. More importantly, however, the definition of liberal

education is not based solely on subjects, particularly in adult education.

Nowadays the term implies:

- no assessment. So a course in, for example, French would be part of the "liberal tradition" if it was not assessed, and part of the "non/illiberal tradition if it was.

- independent. A liberal education involves courses run for individual students, not organisations. Independence can also mean independent of government control of the curriculum.

- non-vocational. A course whose intention was vocational would not be liberal. However, students could use a non-vocational liberal course for vocational purposes.

The WEA and Liberal Adult Education

All the above definitions, old and new, are present in the language used in the WEA. However there is yet another dimension - Branch work versus District provision. The WEA is the largest voluntary provider of adult education in the U.K., with 19 Districts and over 800 Branches. It is committed to democratic ways of working, which means that members of the WEA decide which courses will run.

Most courses are run by Branches. They tend to be non-assessed, independent and non-vocational; liberal in all three senses listed above. Courses run directly by WEA Districts tend to be for other organisations (such as trade unions) and some of them would be assessed (for Open College accreditation as an example) and may be intentionally vocational. However these are only generalisations; the boundaries between these kinds of work are blurred. Many Branches run courses which would not be counted as liberal in the definitions above.

The Negotiated Curriculum

Part of the 'independence' of a course seems to relate to the curriculum. In the 'liberal tradition' the curriculum is negotiated, at least partly, between the student and the tutor. However I am not sure how helpful this concept is. All courses have constraints on them. A course validated by an examining body - a GCSE course for example - we can think of as tightly constrained. At the other end of the spectrum may be a WEA creative writing class. There is no set syllabus, no external validation, no assessment.

However in the first case - the GCSE - there is room for discussion between the participants - students and tutor - as to what should be learned, how and when. There are always choices to be made and in the second case - the creative writing course -there are constraints. It is a creative writing course, not a learning-to-play-the-trumpet course. It lasts a certain length of time and has only certain resources, including the (limited) knowledge of the tutor.

In all courses there should be collective decision-making between the tutor and

student. In some courses there will be more scope for this than in others, but all courses should have an element of the negotiated curriculum.

For me a more important concern is how the curriculum is negotiated. I can remember on first coming into adult education teaching an open evening class on economics. I started by asking what people wanted to learn. The result was dead silence. This should not have been surprising as:

- people can only make real choices on the basis of information. It is generally only at the end of a course that people know most clearly what they want to learn.

- decision-making must be structured. Throughout a course there should be structured activities which enable the participants to review what they have done and the choices available.

Conclusions

Within adult education these terms - "the liberal tradition", "the negotiated curriculum" - have had values attached to them. To some people "liberal" implies a "pure" form of education unsullied by outside influences, such as considerations of practical use. To others it implies a course divorced from the outside world, and based on individualism. I think this is unhelpful.

Courses serve different purposes. Some are for students pursuing individual interests. Others are for students as representatives of collective organisations. In these cases the curriculum must be negotiated between three parties, students, tutor and the organisation which the students represent. It would be quite wrong, for example, if a course for trade union representatives was not primarily about the concerns of that trade union.

It is time the old and new definitions of "liberal education" were put away. Trying to draw distinctions based on subjects or categories of courses is a barrier to more important considerations such as:

- how is the decision to run a course made?

- who is involved in the decision-making process?

- who decides on the aims and the curriculum?

- what are the educational methods used?

- what are the outcomes?

- how is the course evaluated?

It is these considerations that should concern adult educators, not the ultimately futile attempt to impose a binary divide.

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4 **LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION AS CATALYST FOR CHANGE: EVERETT DEAN MARTIN AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

Michael Day

Introduction

In the summer of 1924 Frederick Keppel, President of the Carnegie Corporation, assembled a distinguished group of educators to discuss a growing concern. The concern was adult education. Keppel was considering the feasibility of initiating a comprehensive study of this "new frontier" in education and possibly of supporting some innovative projects in this area.(1) Soon he would embark on a trip to England and Denmark to visit adult education leaders in both countries.

The meeting was well attended. Memos and further conferences on adult education followed. Then, in the Spring of 1926, largely due to the continuing support of the Carnegie Corporation, the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) was founded. A self-proclaimed adult education movement had begun in the United States and the Carnegie Corporation was in good part responsible.

In previous attempts to examine the earliest years of the adult education movement in the U.S. little attention has been given to the contribution of liberal adult education in influencing the direction of this movement. Due to its close association with the founding of the AAAE, has held center stage in most discussion about the movement during its earliest years. Though the influence of the Carnegie Corporation was profound in providing a structure in which the AAAE could function and survive during its formative period, the liberal education of adults was a primary concern of the AAAE leadership. Many initial leaders of the AAAE viewed liberal adult education as a vehicle for both changing society and developing more mature minds. One illustration was Everett Dean Martin and his work at the People's Institute in New York City.

Martin and the People's Institute helped establish and nurture the guiding beliefs adhered to by the custodians and spokespersons of the AAAE. These beliefs included: (a) an inclusive view of adult education providers; (b) an emphasis on self-understanding and mental maturity as the ultimate aim of adult education; (c) a tolerance for differing points of thought; (d) a position that stressed that learning and mental growth were achievements of the human spirit; (e) an understanding that adult education was different from schooling; and (f) an acceptance that adult education was a serious undertaking. These beliefs underlined the agenda set by the AAAE that included a serious study of adult education practice in the United States, the sponsorship of serious debate about adult education, and a policy of nonalignment with specific interest groups.

Getting No Respect

For the past thirty years liberal adult education has gotten "a bum rap" in the United States. Many factors have contributed to this unfair treatment. One reason is the

popularity of Malcolm Knowles and general acceptance of his andragogical model. Another is the minimal presence of museums, the arts, and libraries in the adult education main-stream such as national or state associations. A third reason is the general disregard of liberal adult education by significant "gatekeepers" such as professors of adult education.

Liberal adult education has become the Rodney Dangerfield of adult education in the U.S. Like the American comedian who always complains of getting no respect, it has become fashionable to ignore or dismiss the literature and proponents of liberal adult education. Gordon Darkenwald and Sharon Merriam, for example, in their widely used text, Adult Education:Foundations of Practice, seriously down-played the relevance of liberal adult education. They identified five different emphases or philosophical orientations enveloping adult education: cultivation of the intellect, personal development, progressive education, radical social change, and organisational effectiveness.(2) There was little attempt, by the authors, to veil their particular interests. The treatment of personal development, progressive education and radical social change received far more attention than the other two. Liberal adult education was associated with the cultivation of intellect. The authors seemed to have had difficulty finding liberal adult education theorists in the U.S. and relied primarily on the writings of two British authors; K.H.Lawson and R.W.K.Paterson. In their summary of the various orientations, Darkenwald and Merriam wrote:

> The cultivation of the intellect is one objective of adult education. Proponents of this view (Paterson and Lawson) conceive of adult education as a neutral activity divorced from social action. A curriculum emphasising liberal studies and a traditional view of the teacher-student interaction characterises this approach.(3)

This treatment by Darkenwald and Merriam was unfortunate. It was not an accurate depiction of liberal adult education in the U.S., yet it was digested by many adult education graduate students during the 1980s. The authors totally ignored the meaningful impact of liberal adult education, paid no attention to its roots, and provided their readers with a set of beliefs that caricatured liberal adult education.

As noted above, a major reason for the neglect of liberal adult education in the U.S. is the popularity of Malcolm Knowles and his definition of Andragogy. This idea, almost reverently, makes several assumptions regarding the learning of adults.

> As individuals mature: (a) their self-concept moves from one of being a dependant personality toward being a self-directed human being; (b) they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning; (c) their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to developmental tasks of their social roles; and (e) their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of performance-centeredness.(4)

Andragogy assumes a positive and lasting, growth-oriented view of human beings.

It ignores "the common sensation" that people are as capable of self-destructive behaviour as constructive behaviour, of inactivity as well as activity. This is one of the more dramatic lessons provided by liberal adult education. Andragogy is grounded in immediate felt needs and is ultimately directed by the whims and fancies of people who are constantly changing.

With the growth of graduate study in adult education there emerged an intellectual elite, the gatekeepers of the field, the professors of adult education. The dramatic expansion of graduate programs in the 1970s is a tribute to their perseverance and vision. But with the expansion came a far too narrow view of the field and a sort of amnesia regarding its history. There was a common tendency to view the 1960s as the decade that ushered in the modern era of adult education and to ignore the years that preceded it.

In 1961 a little pamphlett called Adult Education: A New Imperative for Our Times was published. The authors, all members of the Reports Committee of the Commission of Professors of Adult Education, argued that a new age was beginning, "a new note (was) appearing in American educational thought".(5) They also stated that in this new age where change was constant, adults must continue to learn throughout life.(6) The authors directed their comments to three audiences: those responsible for planning and conducting adult and continuing education programs; university and college officials responsible for the design of programs to train and prepare professional adult educators; and public officials and legislators. Though the authors did not ignore that adult education in the United States has a past, they considered it as serving only as some harbinger for its "new mission".(7) If adult education was to become an imperative for their times, as the authors argued it should, then certain conditions would have to be met. One condition was that "a coherent curriculum of adult education must be developed that provides for the sequential development of the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and values required to maintain one's effectiveness in a changing social order".(8)

The 1970s did usher in phenomenal growth in university graduate programs in adult education. But that growth can be viewed as a double-edged sword because so many professional educators were passing through university programs and gaining little appreciation for the historical underpinnings of their field.

In 1979 this researcher and a colleague, both graduate students at the time, initiated an examination of the emphasis given to the historical antecedents of "the modern" adult education movement by adult education graduate programs in the U.S. Alarmed by the minimal attention paid to this subject during their preparation and by the lack of interest shown in this area by fellow graduate students, they hoped that the results of the study would support a request for more attention to both the history and the early literature of the field.(9)

After an initial examination of fifty-eight students at their institution they sent questionaires to thirty-two graduate degree programs in the U.S. and attached copies to a newsletter of the graduate student section of the Adult Education Association U.S.A. 187 additional graduate students responded, representing thirty-four graduate

programs. Due to the study's focus, only graduate students who had completed three or more adult education-related courses were asked to complete the forms. The respondents were evenly divided between Master's and Doctoral programs and, on average, had completed a minimum of thirty semester hours in their programs (well over a solid year of study). Given the advanced status of most respondents, the findings were dramatic.

60% of the graduates surveyed felt that the emphasis given to the history of adult education in their progam was minor yet that was adequate for them. One section of the questionaire listed thirty-four works that represented both historical and contemporary adult education literature. Among the works included on the survey instrument were the following:

Lyman Bryson (1936), Adult Education
Morse Cartwright (1935), Ten Years of Adult Education
Mary Ely, Editor (1936), Adult Education in Action
Dorothy Canfield Fisher (1927), Why Stop Learning
Paulo Freire (1970), Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Cyril Houle (1972), The Design of Education
Ivan Illich (1970), Deschooling Society
Gale Jensen et al, Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study
Malcolm Knowles (1970), Modern Practice of Adult Education
Alan Knox (1977), Adult Development and Learning
Eduard Lindeman (1926), The Meaning of Adult Education
Everett Dean Martin (1926), The Meaning of a Liberal Education

In choosing the historical literature the investigators relied primarily on a 1963 dissertation by Webster Cotton. (10) In his work, Cotton examined mostly American adult education literature from 1919 to 1961. He argued that this literature showed a clear shift in direction by the adult education movement in the United States: from intellectual and social reform to professionalisation.

Of the thirty-four works listed on the instrument only five had been read by over 50% of the respondents, and these were all recent publicatins. Among these works were the Houle and Knowles books cited above. Also listed was the 1970 Handbook of Adult Education. It seemed likely that all three were probably used as textbooks.

Embedded in the list were the works of four authors who acknowledged the liberal adult education agenda of the AAAE: Cartwright, Ely, Fisher and Martin. Few students were familiar with these works. 83% of the respondents were unfamiliar with Martin's The Meaning of a Liberal Education compared to 35% who were unfamiliar with Lindeman's The Meaning of Adult Education.

Liberal Adult Education And The AAAE

In the July 1950, issue of the Adult Education Journal there appeared a transcript of an address by Morse Cartwright to the membership of the AAAE. Due primarily to a declining financial base (11) as well as a visible shift in the agenda of the body (12),

members were preparing to merge with the National Education Association's (NEA) Department of Adult Education. Cartwright, Executive Director of the AAAE from its inception and its final president, resisted this move. He recalled for current AAAE members the idealism and agenda of earlier times and questioned their motivation.

> Is the idealism that was important a quarter-century ago, to a relatively large number of earnest and devoted American men and women, still valid today? In this materialistic day and age, when the emphasis seems to be so largely upon the quantitive and mechanistic, is there room for ideas and organisation plainly committed to excellence in performance, to the superlatives in human conduct, to spiritual values for transcending the petty considerations of everyday life? ...
>
> Adult education must attract the best educational minds available in the years to come. As it did in the beginning, the concept of an enlightened populace must reach out and enlist under its banner those men and women from all walks of life who verily believe in the educational birthright.
>
> There will be many who are intellectually qualified. The task is one of igniting their imaginations with the torch of adult education. It is your obligation to see that this is done ...
>
> But I would far rather see it (AAAE) die than to see it compromise its ideals for mere size or fancied security. I hope the Association will live – dangerously if it must –but live to spread its important portion of the humanitarian doctrine of a better world in which human beings may live with freedom and self-respect.(13)

Cartwright's appeal was generally ignored. In 1951 the AAAE united with the NEA's Department of Adult Education to form the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. Cartwright severed all ties with the new group. The AAAE, as Cartwright viewed it, stood for something. As suggested earlier, the AAAE stood for a more enlightened and mature public. It also stood for a comprehensive view of adult education, a significant reason there was resistance to uniting too closely with any specific group, such as the NEA Department.

Previous treatments of the AAAE often ignored the seriousness with which members of the body viewed this agenda. Knowles, in one of the first historical treatments of the American adult education movement, stressed the structural function of the group while ignoring dominant views regarding the purpose of adult education itself. Using the constitution of the Association as his major source, Knowles identified the agenda of the AAAE as merely the promotion and improvement of adult education, the gathering and disseminaition of information about adult education, and cooperation with groups in the U.S. and abroad engaged in or concerned about adult education.(14) To carry out its agenda the AAAE was highly subsidised by the Carnegie Corporation.

In great detail Amy Rose examined the Carnegie Corporation's interest in the

formation of the AAAE. She argued that the founding of the AAAE was directly linked to the Corporation's "original mandate to advance and diffuse knowledge".(15) She also convincingly argued that the leadership of the Corporation beginning with Andrew Carnegie and progressing to Frederick Keppel (President of the Corporation from 1923 to 1941) were committed to the goal of a more knowledgeable and self-reliant citizenry. To help the Corporation in its plans for adult education an initial advisory group was assembled.(16) As Rose noted, the group had differing views regarding the purpose of adult education. But, when the AAAE celebrated its tenth anniversary, a dominant view of the purpose of adult education had emerged. It was voiced earlier in this discussion by Morse Cartwright and noted by another researcher of the period, Webster Cotton.

Cotton observed that during the initial years of the AAAE's existance a reformist spirit, directed at both the individual and society, pervaded the American adult education movement. After an extensive examination of forty years of American adult education literature (1920-1960), Cotton concluded that the literature portrayed a significant shift in direction for the movement, from reformist zeal to professionalistion.(17)

In a more recent treatment of the AAAE, Harold Stubblefield agreed that the Association, through spokespersons such as Cartwright, had indeed articulated a set of beliefs about adult education even though they may have resisted an "official" definition of the term. Adult education, according to Stubblefield, had become associated with lifelong learning -learning that stressed continuing growth throughout life, not just a preparation for living. Adult education had also become associated with moral and spiritual enrichment. Stubblefield also confirmed that Cartwright himself viewed the central focus of adult education as "a continuing cultural process pursued without ulterior purpose".(18)

When the AAAE celebrated its tenth anniversary a dominant theme regarding the purpose of adult education had emerged, enough so that Cartwright could later lament its passing. But still missing from the discussion surrounding the ideals and agenda of the AAAE is a clearer articulation of dominant beliefs. True, the leadership of the Carnegie Corporation was itself committed to the ideal of a more knowledgeable and self-reliant citizenry. Yet, we can no longer assume that other factors did not contribute to the adoption of specific values by the AAAE. It is possible that other individuals and other undertakings influenced the direction of the AAAE.

Everett Dean Martin And The People's Institute

Among the earnest and devoted who Cartwright felt subscribed to and promoted "the ideals" promulgated by the AAAE was Everett Dean Martin. Shortly after Martin's death in 1941, Cartwright had this to say about his friend:

> For those who enjoyed Everett Dean Martin's personal friendship, an intimate and precious tie has been broken. Their sense of loss at this time is overwhelming, and only time will temper it into sweet memory. Fine and loyal as a friend, capable and energetic as a champion of causes that he believed to be right, here was a figure of a man that compelled not only admiration and

respect but affection and love.

> Dr Martin was the spiritual father of the American Association for Adult Education. He wrote its Constitution and had great influence in its founding... He envisaged a role of service for the Association to the movement, and he clearly saw a function of service for the movement to humanity. His was a full life and a rich one. He will live on in the deeds and lives of his many disciples.(19)

Other members of the AAAE joined Cartwright in his grief and affection for Martin:

> With the passing of Everett Dean Martin, ... there comes to a close not only the life and work of one of the foremost leaders of adult education in America, but also a chapter in the history of the Association. Everett Dean Martin's life was so definitely a part of this organisation that it is difficult to think of one without the other. He was the architect of its original design, the author of its constitution, a member of its governing body from its inception, a past President, and chairman of its Executive Board at the time of his death. He was in truth the embodiment of its spirit. We who have been privileged to know his mind, his spirit, and his rare fellowship desire to record here our deep sense of personal and professional loss in the passing of one of the founders of this Association.(20)

Everett Dean Martin was born in Jacksonville, Illinois, July 5, 1880. He was the oldest of six children. At the age of twenty-four Martin graduated `Cum Laude' from Illinois College, Jacksonville. Shortly after that he attended the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. In 1907 he married and fathered three daughters. From 1906 to 1915 Martin did pastoral duties for several churches: the First Congregational Church, Des Moines, Indiana. During these nine years Martin gained a regional reputation for the Des Moines Regsiter and Leader.(21)

In 1915 Martin divorced his first wife and resigned from the ministry. He then moved to New York City, found work initially as an editorial writer on the New York Globe, and remarried.

Martin's relationship with the People's Institute of Nw York City began in late 1916. Hired as a lecturer on modern psychology during the 1916-17 winter session, he quickly endeared himself to the Institute and was appointed Assistant to the then Acting Director and Secretary of the Institute in November, 1917. (22) As Director of the People's Institute from 1922 to its closing in 1934, Everett Dean Martin emerged, rapidly, as a well-known, educator and social critic. Through activities such as free public lectures from the podium of the Great Hall of Cooper Union, often before crowds of over 1,000 people, Martin preached the secular gospel of adult education. Martin's popular lectures began reaching even larger audiences in 1920 when The Behaviour of Crowds was published. Within the next fifteen years eight more books appeared, including The Mystery of Religion (1924), The Meaning of a Liberal Education (1926), Liberty (1930), The Conflict of the Individual and the Mass (1932),

and Farewell to Revolution (1935). During this time Martin also established a lasting relationship with Frederick Keppel of the Carnegie Corporation and became a key figure in the Corporation's plans for adult education.

In 1936, amidst growing concern over his health and challenged by an offer from Claremont Colleges in Southern California to be part of an experimental program in teaching, Martin resigned his makeshift position as Director of the Department of Social Philosophy at Cooper Union and headed west.(23) This venture fell far short of expectations and with continued failing health Martin suffered a fatal heart attack in May 1941.

Martin's position regarding adult education was clear and emphatic. His beliefs were well formulated when he and seventeen others met to discuss the subject of adult education at the office of the Carnegie Corporation in June of 1924. During the discussion Martin stressed the vital role performed by informal educational facilities in the self education of adults, citing libraries as an example.(24) Martin also supported the suggestion that the Carnegie Corporation conduct a study of adult education and that an organised and coordinated adult education movement be initiated. He stated that such an effort might "serve as a protective measure in that it would aid in disseminating truth and in discouraging many unsound agencies and individuals interested in exploiting the public under the name of adult education".(25) Martin could have identified the People's Institute as another example of an informal educational facility serving the public.

In a memo to President Keppel shortly after the June meeting Martin reiterated his support of the proposed study of adult education but cautioned against moving too quickly. He felt the Corporation should first formulate a definition of adult education and identify its purpose. Martin wrote:

> It would seem that the aim of the Carnegie Corporation is to discover what is being done outside regular schools and colleges for the increase of culture and the advancement of civilisation; what may be done to encourage such efforts, to increase their effectiveness, raise their standards, and coordinate their activities so far as this may be achieved without over standardisation or too great uniformity. This is undertaken to the end that there may be a more enlightened self-disciplined public; that a larger number of people may learn to think more clearly and courageously; may become less opinionated; less slaves of progaganda, fads, and catch words; and may achieve a higher degree of temperance of judgement; of respect for the values of civilisation; and that there may be a larger number of persons in the community better able to solve the problems of our common life. Not everything that is called adult education makes for these ends. Everything depends upon the spirit in which such activities are conducted. (26)

Martin viewed himself to be, primarily, a teacher. As early as 1910 when he was pastor of the People's Church in Dixon, Illinois, Martin stressed his role as a teacher. In a draft of a Sunday morning sermon titled "Christianity is Socialism". Martin wrote

"I do not consider myself a priest but a teacher and as such it becomes my privilege to acquaint people with the mightiest movement of modern times".(27) That movement was socialism. Again, toward the end of Martin's life part of what attracted him to a faculty position at Scripps was the prospect of "embarking upon a truly experimental program in teaching".(28)

Though he was a teacher, Martin was not an academic. He was not university trained in an academic discipline. He held only one "formal" higher education position, at Scripps, and this appointment came later in life. At the time of this appointment he was fifty-six years of age. After a three year trial period, he was not reappointed. Martin was, what he encouraged others to become, a cultivated amateur.

In The Meaning of a Liberal Education, Martin wrote, "Many people think of education as something `high-brow', a fastidiousness which belongs to the elite. There are those who give the impression that education is a thing of books and schools and formalities; and that there is a recognised fraternity of the finished products of the system".(29) Martin viewed education differently. Education was "the organisation of knowledge into human excellence".(30) It was "not the mere possession of knowledge, but the ability to reflect upon it and grow in wisdom".(31) Thus, education was available to all; one only had to pursue it. Again, he wrote, "One does not `get' an education anywhere. One becomes an educated person by virtue of patient study, quiet meditation, intellectual courage, and a life devoted to the discovery and service of truth".(32) This was the way of the educated amateur. This was Martin's way. And as he repeatedly stated, the aim of adult education was to foster this spirit in others as well.

As an amateur scholar and teacher Martin felt that his charge was to promote thinking. In a 1931 article titled "What I Believe" that appeared in The Nation, Martin stressed,

> What we believe is important, but to the educator how and why we believe is more important. Im my work as a teacher I find that I always have to contend with this matter of belief. Most of our beliefs are acquired irrationally; they have been fostered in us during childhood, they are accepted on authority; they are the result of asserting that things are so merely because we want them to be so; they are often based on prejudice and tribal legend and are maintained as face-saving devices. Most people's beliefs are, psychologically considered, forms of compulsive thinking.

As for his approach to faith and knowledge, Martin identified himself as a sceptic:

> My years of study have made me a sceptic. But I use the term in its etymological sense, not as the word sceptic is commonly used. I have no desire to defend the position of the wretched imaginary `absolute sceptic', the man of straw created by epistemologists and theologians. I do not believe such a sceptic exists. At any rate I am not wretched but happy in my scepticism. I am not a disillusioned realist, or a pessimist, or an egoist, or a misanthrope. I find much challenge and beauty in the

> world. I find people amusing and often delightful, and to ne the life of the spirit is much more real and adventurous since I outgrew the earlier habits of belief. But I no longer worry for fear the universe will go bankrupt if some comforting dogma or illusion should be found untrue, nor do I worry about God or immortality, or the cooperative commonwealth. This is a relief, and it had also somewhat improved my disposition.(34)

Two years later in another piece of self-examination, this time for the Survey Graphic, Martin elaborated on his movement toward scepticism. He described a conversation he had with a group of friends in New York City. He noted, "We were all middle age, each for years actively identified with some movement for social reform, everyone a lifelong liberal".(35) Then he noted:

> The conversation drifted to the present state of the country and the world. How little our lives' labors had accomplished. We recognised the possibility that our causes – even should they be victorious, which was doubtful– would hardly achieve the results once hoped for. One after another admitted that while he still believed in his social ideas, he had come to hold them in a different way. Something of their pageantry had vanished. One no longer imagined that the great cause was the ultimate solution of the ills of humanity. Perhaps our judgement was proof we were growing old ...
>
> Then someone suggested that perhaps we were at last growing up, that hitherto our causes had kept us in a belated state of adolescence, that only now were we able to see the world as intelligent people in all times had seen it. We had been seeking the spiritual meaning of life in the wrong direction – in the victory of some preconceived idea rather than in the quality of thinking and living which we alone could make ourselves and our communities truly civilised. And how could we have expected either ourselves or other immature and only partially civilised people to attain a satisfactory common life merely by manipulating the external environment? Environmental improvement was necessary but it was one among other means to the end of producing intelligent, self-disciplined, responsible human beings. It was this latter which we recongised as our true cause; it had been so all along; the rest was secondary. We still believed, only we saw that we believed differently.(36)

One might well argue that Martin could well afford his scepticism and liberalism. His life was fairly comfortable and rather secure. And his conclusions may well have provided some solace for a man beginning his sixth decade of life, helping to rationalise away his youthful idealism. But, as an examination of Martin's formative years suggests, there is a consistency of spirit in this man. Though he moved from the pulpit to the podium, and from the teachings of Christ to those of Socrates, Abelard, Erasmus, Montaigne, William James, Freud and Nietzsche, Martin possessed for over thirty years a somewhat battered yet unbroken earnestness regarding his

mission and message.

In a 1941 essay Mortimer Adler, who was once a lecturer for Martin at the People's Institute, considered the programs at the Institute the best illustration of adult education yet offered in the U.S.(37) During the period Martin directed the People's Institute the programs consisted primarily of weekly lectures and discussions as well as evening seminars. The reading of great books always played a significant role in Martin's work at the People's Institute. Scott Buchanan, once Martin's Assistant at the Institute, had the following to say about Martin's approach to adult education:

> I always thought of Mr Martin's lectures as the ideal system of admission for an adult university: no examinations nor assignments, but the presentation of first rate material in such a form that a student could try out his abilities with others until he came to a point where he could say for himself whether he should go or turn to something else. The rhetorical character of the lectures would also give the individual an opportunity and a medium for readjusting his sentiments to tune him as a whole person for the pursuit of ideas, a kind of gymnastic and music to prepare for the intensive business.(38)

Cartwright found Martin to be "clear thinking ... (with) an unerring – almost an intuitive sense of what constitute the essential enduring values in reasonable living ..." (39) Further, Cartwright noted:

Thousands who had heard him lecture in all parts of the United States, more thousands who had read his numerous books and articles on philosophical and psychological subjects, and the large audience which for years listened to his notable Friday night addresses and discussions in the Great Hall of Cooper Union in New York (commonly referred to as the Cooper Union Forum), all attested to the challenging qualities of his mind and heart. People might disagree with Everett Dean Martin's views, but they never failed to accord the exposition of those views the closest attention and consideration. The intellectual honesty, the calm courage, and the undoubted sincerity of the man behind the ideas admitted no barriers between dais and audience. His audiences thought with him. His desire always was less to convince than to cause the individual to reevaluate his own convictions. It was this consistent quality that made Everett Martin one of the great teachers of our time and a genuine educator in every sense of that fine term.(40)

Others attested to Martin's skills as a teacher and lecturer. One individual, who during the late 1920s, frequently attended Martin's Friday evening lectures at the Cooper Union Forum, reported that, "Martin has a way of setting you thinking in new and adventurous lines about things happening right now in this country ... And he accounts for certain conditions as only a sound social psychologist and thinker can do. Going to the lectures is the most interesting thing I do".(41)

Another individual, Lola Jean Simpson, writing for Harpers Magazine in 1929, vividly, as well as enthusiastically, described one of Martin's Friday evening lectures in the Great Hall of Cooper Union:

As he develops his subject, bringing into play the varied resources of a trained social psychologist, his listeners are a remarkable study. They are following every word, weighing each syllable with a detachment which separates them from an ordinary audience. When the long lecture at last draws to a close a motion sweeps over the throng. Hands flash up all over the hall. Some of the more impetuous hearers leap to their feet. The speaker's statements are challenged; he is appealed to, admonished, opposed. For half an hour volleys of sharp questions from the audience are met by keen answers. Sparks fly. Almost every subject in the range of human knowledge is touched upon – history, sociology, politics, science, and literature. Ideas are suggested to be thrashed out in another session.(42)

The portrait of Martin gleaned from the above testimonials is that of a provocative writer and speaker who possessed a keen intellect, an astute social critic, a dynamic, challenging, and broadly educated teacher, a principle proponent of the liberal education of adults, and a major leader of the adult education movement in the U.S. In 1934, the editors of the Journal of Adult Education, the official mouthpiece of the AAAE, kidded Martin good-naturedly about his strong association with liberal education. "We found a most apt characterisation of Dr Martin in a recent letter from a foreign correspondent who, by a slight error – more right than wrong – referred to him as "Everett Martin, Dean of Liberal Education".(43)

For Martin education, learning and maturing, could not be separated from life. Education was viewed as a voyage of discovery, a search for knowledge and understanding of what contitutes "the good life". Such a journey placed many demands on its voyager, a sense of direction and purpose, a critical spirit, and discrimination – demands that Martin felt few individuals were willing or prepared to meet.

The specific role of adult education in this endeavour was to serve as a beacon, a point of reference, for the journey. Adult education stood as a vehicle to a more enlightened life. Assuming the position of fellow voyager, the adult educator, guided by a philosophy of liberal education, was to help in the cultivation of mature-thinking adults.

Martin warned that four traits of the American character boded ill for the growth of adult education as he viewed it: a relish for structure, an excessive emphasis on the practical, an attraction to shortcuts, and a weakness for propaganda.(44)

Given Martin's bleak appraisal of the vulnerability of many Americans, it seems all the more noteworthy that he remained a believer in the power of adult education when properly conceived. Martin believed the adult education movement could become a vehicle for channelling the spirit and developing the characteristics of the mature individual.

Believing that the central purpose of adult education was to enhance life, not income, Martin was well aware that this view ran counter to that of more pragmatic individuals. He saw the emphasis on excessive vocationalism in modern education as a narrowing force in the life of the free citizen. Martin consistently scolded adult educators for

responding primarily to the more practical and social interests of adult learners while ignoring the more liberal and classical content which he viewed as more appropriate to adult education. He indicated in his Presidential Address to the AAAE:

> What we as adult educators need to remember is that if men are not taught good philosophies, they are pretty sure to turn to bad ones. How can we meet this challenge? ... We can ... realise that as educators we are custodians of humanity's cultural inheritance. We can contrive to keep that inheritance alive, to understand it and interpret it. (45)

The appropriate method of instruction for those commited to meet the challenge posed by Martin was an emphasis on the educational trinity of books, lectures and discussion. In The Meaning of a Liberal Education, he noted:

> It is obvious that the methods of adult education must be different from those in common use in teaching children. The instructor cannot compel attendance; he cannot require submission to his authority; he must realise that he is among people who, though they have not his special knowledge, have yet each of his own experience, and he must see the relations of his knowledge to such experience; and in fact he must make himself a student with the others. (46)

Martin felt that the experience of the learner was to be valued, and used by instructors in adult education. He also considered adult education to be an active, voluntary and partcipatory process, engaging learners, through discussion, in the exploration of ideas.

Martin and other early leaders of the AAAE remain an enigma for mainstream adult educators today. Theirs was not a tender-minded view of adult education. They neither accepted that individuals, as a rule, were naturally growth or learning-oriented, nor that their curriculum should be based on pragmatic "felt needs". They held dear the cultural tradition they had inherited, highly valuing characteristics such as tolerance, sincerity, intellectual modesty, doubt, sensitivity and a sense of humour.

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5 LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION AND THE LIBERATION OF ADULTS

Shuichi Shimada

Some Problems of Adult Education in Present-day Japan

Professor J E Thomas, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham, says in the preface for Japanese readers of his book Learning in Japan (1985) "liberal education has been a corner-stone of educational practice in the civilised world for a long time". He goes on:

> there was a clear demonstration that the Japanese recognised the value of liberal education, and appreciated that tyranny can not survive as long as there is a well educated and cultured adult population which is forever asking the question: "why?".

A new present-day tyrant is before us now. The tyrant is the "Information-oriented Society". Oversupply of information makes us blind.

Many people enjoy a lot of information; they feel that they have got necessary knowledge and learned much. Is the purpose of adult education only to give adults many chances to get various kinds of information?

In such a society, learning means only getting information prepared by others and education means only adjusting to given conditions. The history of adult education in Japan shows us what is "liberal" for people. It means not only "liberal learning" free from every oppression or learning all kinds of liberal arts, but also training people to be themselves: independent learners who can organise self-directed learning and conquer any kind of control or oppression.

The 1990 Life-long Education Law sought to promote lifelong education organised and guided by local governments and private enterprises under the control of the central government. The character of this law is very different from that of the Social Education Law. From here arise many difficult problems and challenges. It is very important to create free and independent learning activities chosen by the people themselves.

The Tradition of Liberal Arts Learning and the Modern Educational System

Before the end of the Edo period in 1867 many people in both urban and rural areas had been learning 'reading' and 'writing' at private elementary school ("temple school"). They learned not only the 3 R's but also good manners and etiquette. Sometimes, especially in urban areas, young women learned classics, poetry, traditional music, tea ceremony and flower arrangement. This liberal arts learning was useful for people to cultivate sensibility and understand humanity and the order of nature.

As a modern educational system was established under the Meiji Government however, education for people became different from liberal arts learning and

indoctrination took the place of education. Traditional liberal arts learning was compelled to drop out from among the regular subjects of the modern education curriculum. The government thought it unnecessary to teach liberal arts to train people to be "brave soldiers and obedient workers". A Normal School code was registered in 1886 and compulsory school teachers were trained under the government control.

An "Imperial Rescript on Education" was promulgated in 1890 and school boys and girls were indoctrinated with loyalty to the Emperor and the State and in ancestor worship, filial piety and obedience to the social order, without learning any of the points of view of social science. Popular education was widely organised for adults, which tried to train for "citizenship" and obedience to the State. It was not concerned with any kind of liberal education. We can not find any "adult education" in the true sense of the word at that time. Liberal adult education was only supported by those people who endeavoured to liberate themselves from oppression and control of thought and speech.

Has the Social Education Law secured Liberal Adult Education?

After World War II, education was liberated from the rigid frame of "indoctrination". The Ministry of Education promoted the establishment of learning centres such as 'Kominkan' for popular education everywhere, and encouraged the organisation of independent learning groups or bodies. So many people learned and studied democratic ways of life and tried to improve living conditions or revive old-fashioned customs.

At that time, "Liberal Adult Education" meant learning activities for the construction of a liberal and democratic society, the destruction of ultra-nationalism and, the development of democratic human nature. In 1949 a Social Education Law was enacted. Article III shows us the principle of adult education administration and the 'right to learn' of the people:

> The state and local public bodies shall assist in maintaining a congenial environment in which it is possible for individual citizens to be encouraged at sundry times and places in cultural and educational activities, which will assist them in daily living, by providing various kinds of facilities, sponsoring meetings, and making available information and materials necessary for social education

During and after the Korean war however, the government became oppressive against people's independent learning activities. They were very fearful of an upsurge of people's political awareness. It became more difficult to provide lectures and events which were critical of the policies of the government. In that situation, the meaning of "Liberal" was changed into "non-political" or "non-social-minded". Not a few people and bodies tried to organise democratic learning movements, and learned how to develop people's independent learning activities. It was clear that "Liberal Adult Education" in a true sense of word, could not exist without people's resistance to oppression and continuing efforts to sustain it.

People Have Learned to Liberate Themselves

(a) Struggles for Formation of People's Liberal Learning before 1945

During the development of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement at the beginning of the Meiji era (about 1880) not a few private schools and learning groups were organised, and many young people learned democracy, freedom, and human rights. In the latter half of the Meiji era some popular lectures were presented for workers by Sen Katayama, which were taken over to the Workers' School Movement in the Taisho era (about 1920). These educational activities were very useful to assist workers to understand their conditions suffered from low wages and the structure of capitalism. It was an "Education of Liberation" for them. In rural districts youth movements expanded against undemocratic order and for self-improvement. Most of them were involved in the educational policies of the government, but some organised their own learning activities and tried to keep their independence. They learned freedom and democracy. Some young farmers in Nagano prefecture organised a Free University, which spread rapidly to various other places. Not only young farmers but also workers, teachers, a few young women and middle-aged people attended the lectures and learned philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, literature and other subjects.

At that time "Liberal Adult Education" had two meanings. One was free and independent learning activities for getting freedom, and the other was the learning of liberal arts for getting democracy.

The government denied both of them and oppressed them, so independent learning of the liberal arts was a struggle for getting fundamental human rights.

(b) Development of People's Independent Learning Activities in the Midst of High Urbanization

In the 1960s' hyper-growth of the Japanese economy, on the one hand people in rural areas suffered from depopulation, and on the other people in urban areas had severe problems of overcrowding. They learned not only how to manage their daily living but also how to deal with increasing crises in agriculture, the housing shortage, pollution and traffic accidents, and how to improve the poor conditions of social security, welfare, education and culture. They recognised that it was necessary to learn to improve these social conditions. Some people organised local residents' campaigns to increase learning facilities and conditions. They found that present-day "Liberal Arts" develop an ability to learn how to improve these social conditions. Some people organised local residents' campaigns to increase learning facilities and conditions. They have been developing a new type of Japanese, free from passivity. Indeed, even in rural areas some democratic and progressive mayors were elected.

(c) Expansion of the People's Movement for Independence and autonomy in Adult Education Administration and Activities

During the 1970s and 1980s, confrontation between the educational policies of the

central government and people's learning activities increased. The government proposed plans to reform adult education under the name of "Lifelong Integrated Education". They prepared a new law, but could not lay the bill before the Diet in the face of people's opposition. In the bill the powers of central and local government would be increased; on the other hand independence of educational facilities and systems for people's participation in administration would be denied. So, unfortunately, the idea of "Lifelong Integrated Education" has been misunderstood in Japan and many people are cautious about it even now.

So far as people's learning activities are concerned, the trend is for independent learning activities and participation in educational administration to increase. Now not a few people are trying to practise new learning activities, not only independently but also cooperatively. For example, they join with others who are interested in improving their daily living and organise various kinds of learning activities concerned with social security, welfare, health, environment, pollution, education, culture and other political, social or daily living affairs. In present-day Japan, learning activities organised by members of residents' campaigns and cooperative societies are very popular, next to that of educational providers like 'Kominkan'. They are producing many useful human relations among people in rural areas as well as those in urban areas.

Through these activities people understand the economic, political, and cultural structures of present-day society, and the many problems that people come up against and ought to be able to solve. They recognize the necessity of learning the real values of human life and human relations in work and community life, which are broadening their horizons in social life. These learning activities are the core of present-day "Liberal Adult Education".

Liberal Adult Education and Liberation of Adults

The character and functions of "Liberal Adult Education" have changed with the times, but its nature has been immutable. Liberal education always means to liberate people from all kinds of oppression and prejudice, and to cultivate humanity. Education is neither direction nor indoctrination, but encouragement of independent learning activities. It is very important to encourage adults to grasp their own problems and learn to develop themselves and the society. They should learn how to live and what to do at the present time to realize good human nature, good human relations and good social conditions.

In these days various kinds of crises are increasing all over the world – wars, racism, discrimination, environmental pollution, the North-South problems and so on. People must learn how to survive and live together in peace, without any structural violence.

At the same time, people must learn how to improve and develop their own personalities, which are now fragmented and become selfish and apathetic under the influence of 'meritocracy'. People can not develop themselves and the society without understanding many points of view and learning with many people of different standpoints. This learning may be called "cooperative learning". Cooperative learning is able to put "Self-directed Learning" into practice, to liberate people to become free

and independent learners and, at the same time, educators of themselves.

The new "Liberal Adult Education" which we desire in Japan is this.

II CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

6 VOCATIONALISM, COMPETENCE AND DEWEY'S LIBERALISM

Terry Hyland

The recent government White Paper (DES,1991) on further education (now enacted as the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act) established a new framework for debate about post-school education in general and vocational education and training (VET) in particular. This has helped to bring into sharper focus one of the central issues in this sphere, described by Maclure (1991) as the 'historic failure of English education to integrate the academic and the practical, the general and the vocational' (p.28). Although there was a consensus that something had to be done about post-school education, there is rather less agreement about whether the government initiatives will have any real impact on the system.

After examining the origins of the academic/vocational divide, I go on to question the government's strategy for upgrading and enhancing vocational studies. In particular, I want to suggest that faith in the competence-based approach of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) is sadly misplaced; competence-based strategies have a number of conceptual and epistemological weaknesses which make them unsatisfactory candidates for the task of bridging the vocational/academic gulf (Hyland, 1992a). What is required is not just changes in assessment techniques or administrative arrangements but the establishment of a sound theoretical foundation on which to build programmes of general-practical and vocational-academic reconciliation. I suggest we can find the building blocks for such a foundation in John Dewey's theory of knowledge and ideas on vocational education.

Origins of the Vocational/Academic Divide

The cultural and socio-economic factors which underpin what is regarded as the gap between vocational and academic studies pre-date the establishment of compulsory schooling in Britain and are present in perhaps their starkest form in the public school tradition and the ideal of the gentleman. Owing something to the Confucian conception which associated a particular style and etiquette with an hierarchical social system, the 'gentleman ideal' emerged as the approved form of education for the public schools which fed the civil service and government (Wilkinson,1970). The standard form of classical education central to this ideal gained its prestige not from any particular content thought to be intrinsically desirable but from its endorsement by and close association with the most powerful political and economic groups in British society. As Wilkinson observes:

> The gentleman was taught to consider himself above specialisation, whether in the sense of regional style or that of technical know-how ... technical specialisation was the mark of one who had to use knowledge to earn a living and not for the leisured pursuit of wisdom and beauty ... (ibid; p.133)

The developments in technical education in the late 19th century were to demonstrate just how powerful the influence of this non-instrumental conception of knowledge could be. Demands for the improvement and expansion of technical education and

training gathered force after Britain's comparatively poor performance at the 1867 Paris Exhibition and eventually led to the 1889 Technical Instruction Act (Musgrave,1966). The concept of training which emerged, however, was highly theoretical – 'instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries' (Musgrave, 1970a, p.68) – and totally inadequate and inappropriate to industrial requirements.

The pervasive influence of the theoretical can be discerned in much of the major educational legislation from the turn of the century to the 1944 Education Act and beyond, and this was typically accompanied by the ascription of an inferior status to practical pursuits. Occupationally relevant training was invariably subservient to a 'good liberal education' which would easily enable students to 'acquire any technical knowledge which they might need' (Wardle, 1976, p.120). During the inter-war years as more recruits to industry were drawn from higher education, it was still mainly general knowledge and attitudes which were sought more often than specific vocational skills (Sanderson,1981).

Investigating the origins and development of vocational schooling in Britain, Shilling (1989) chose to characterise the post-1945 period as one in which 'education-industry relations shifted from a collective to a corporate strategy and schools became subject to greater industrial influence' (p.39). The academic/vocational divide and the higher prestige of theoretical studies was, however, maintained even during this period as bodies such as the Federation of British Industry and the Institute of Mechanical Engineers sought to enhance the recruitment of abler pupils from schools rather than pressing for a general upgrading of vocational education. The technical schools, established under the 1944 Act as a strand of the proposed tripartite system, withered and declined as employers looked to the grammar schools to provide high-level professional manpower (McCulloch, et al 1985).

The re-assertion of the importance of work-related schooling in the aftermath of the Great Debate following Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976 (Whitty,1985) was prompted by economic recession, a sharp decline in the apprenticeship system and the onset of high youth unemployment. The focus of education-industry relations in the 1970s and 1980s shifted to the process of schooling itself, as schemes such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) and the Schools Vocational Programme were developed with the intention of promoting 'industrially relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes in schools' (Shilling, op cit; p.58). In the sphere of higher education, the Enterprise Initiative launched by the Training Agency in 1987 was designed to build 'enterprise skills into degree courses' (Jessup,1991,p.114).

Bridging the Gulf: Some Recent Proposals

In spite of the welter of initiatives and strategies tried out in the VET field over the last decade or so, the inadequacies remain alongside the gulf between general education and vocational/practical studies. It is true, as Pring (1990) suggests, that the best practice of some TVEI schemes is worthy of incorporation into the reform of A levels in the attempt to span the cultural chasm (though, unfortunately, the current DES plan to retain A and AS levels in their present form does not seem to allow for this). Triggs

(1989) has similarly pointed out the undoubted advantages and benefits to students of the best pre-vocational schemes. It is worth noting, however, that the learner-centredness of these schemes (as with REPLAN schemes for unemployed adults) is by no means a vocational innovation but, rather, a blatant example of the appropriation of ideas from the progressive and experiential tradition of liberal education for use in rather different work-related contexts (Edwards,1991). But even this welcome cross-fertilisation has done little to bridge the divisions, and Maclure's reference to the 'historical failure' of the system is as accurate today as it was in 1943 when the Norwood Committee considered these issues (Musgrave,1970b,pp.25-6).

Once it was realised that the 1988 Education Reform Act not only failed to address the urgent issues of post-compulsory reform but actually aggravated matters by introducing a rigid subject-based curriculum, the proposals and reform plans started to come forth thick and fast. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) entered the arena early with a proposal for a revolution in the delivery and finance of VET, advocating reforms based on 'core skills' which would ensure that half of the employed workforce had achieved NVQ level 3 by the year 2000 (CBI,1989). The Labour Party attempted to top this by suggesting the introduction of four-year 'traineeships' for school-leavers based on the German system (Nash,1990), but the marketplace appeal of training credits proved too powerful to resist and schemes piloting the credits were launched in April 1991 in 11 regional Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).

A wide range of recommendations for VET curriculum reform has accompanied these recent developments in the field. The common core or foundation curriculum was intended to bridge the gap between NVQs and academic qualifications (Nash,1989), but the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) has called for the abolition of A levels and the establishment of baccalaureate-style advanced diplomas which would accommodate the needs of the whole post-16 sector (Nash,1991; there is now an influential college-university alliance pressing for such reform, Nash,1992). Maclure favours a radical mixture of a number of these elements and outlines a bold plan for a national 16-19 system, and the establishment of a Department of Education and Training (to bridge the Department for Educationm/Employment Department division of interests) and a joint examination council bringing together several different quasi-governmental bodies (op.cit;pp.88-9).

The recent government White Papers on further education can be regarded as attempts to respond to these pressing problems against the background of political struggle for the educational high ground. In addition to the proposals which remove colleges from local education authority control, the White Papers (and the Further and Higher Education Act) recommend a much stronger role for the TECs in planning post-16 provision, and the extension of the training credit scheme to all 16 and 17 year olds. In terms of the curriculum, the chief changes involve the extension of NVQs to incorporate a general NVQ intended to bridge the gap between the academic (GCSE,A and AS levels) and the Vocational (CPVE,BTEC and CGLI craft courses), and the introduction of new ordinary and advanced diplomas which will record achievement in both areas with the aim of establishing 'equal status for academic and vocational education' (DES,1991,op.cit;p.24).

Competence and National Vocational Qualifications: Some Problems

The use of an upgraded and extended NVQ framework as a means of enhancing VET and bridging the vocational/academic divide needs to take account of a number of problems and shortcomings inherent in competence-based approaches to education and training. Such strategies appear to be open to criticism in two main areas: 1) an imprecise notion of competence and insubstantial knowledge base; and 2) a behaviourist learning foundation and resultant narrowness of focus.

1) There has been surprisingly little discussion about the epistemological status of competence as employed in NVQs, though what analysis exists seems to compound the nebulosity which surrounds the concept. Definitions of competence 'abound in the literature' (UDACE,1989,p.15) and the term 'competence has different meanings to different people' (Debling & Hallmark,1990,p.9). These comments are confirmed by the research of Haffenden & Brown (1989) on the implementation of competence-based strategies in further education colleges. They discovered that a wide range of notions was in operation and reported a 'plethora of opinions about competence and its definition' (ibid;p.139). In a similar vein, Ashworth & Saxton's systematic analysis of the concept of competence revealed ambiguities and inconsistencies which add up to a damaging critique of the whole approach. Competences are of 'unclear logical status'(1990,p.9) and the meaning of competence 'has not yet been coherently specified'; in particular, 'it is not clear whether a competence is a personal attribute, an act, or an outcome of behaviour'(ibid;p.3).

Clearly there is something unsatisfactory about a theoretical perspective which apparently recognises knowledge and understanding only to the extent that these are revealed in the performance of specific occupational tasks (Hyland,1991a,b). Wolf(1989) has tried to explain the NVQ position in this respect by suggesting that knowledge and understanding are not 'divorced from performance' but are 'constructs which have to be inferred from observable behaviour, just as much as competence itself' (p.45). But this merely emphasises the fact that knowledge and understanding are <u>different</u> from competence, and this raises questions about the validity of programmes which are concerned principally with the assessment of observable behaviour rather than with the knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes required to generate that behaviour.

More recent NVQ developments have sought to address these problems, and there is now a distinction for assessment purposes between 'first order measures' concerned with performance alone and 'second order measures' which take into account 'underpinning knowledge and understanding' (Wolf,1990,pp.35-6). Even this extension has not provided sufficient depth and breadth to escape criticisms of excessive occupational specificity levelled at NVQs by Raggatt (1991), and it seems that the idea of 'generic competences' (Jessup,1991,p.30) will need further work if the desired transferability of the core skills approach is to be realised in vocational programmes.

2) Originating in performance-based teacher education schemes in America in the 1960s (Tuxworth,1989), competence-based strategies are founded squarely on behaviourist learning principles and, thus, open to all the criticisms which have been

levelled against such schemes. Collins links the rise of competence-based schemes with the move towards a 'narrow technicist approach' to education in general which' defines useful knowledge in the light of bureaucratic and corporate needs' (1991.p.45). The specificity and putative precision claimed by competence-based programmes have an obvious attraction for those already committed to prespecified outcomes and input/output efficiency in education. Concentration only on the observable and measurable aspects of behaviour, however, will not necessarily bring about the achievement of the wider vocational goals which are currently receiving attention. Moss (1981) points out that the observable parts of tasks describe neither their complete nor even their most significant elements in many cases, an observation endorsed by Ashworth and Saxton in their claim that the current conception of competence is 'open to complaints that it is atomistic, individualistic, and unable to cover all types of relevant behaviour or mental activity'(op.cit;p.3).

It is worth noting that the use of behavioural objectives has never been popular in Britain. From the demise of the Revised Code in the 19th century to the abject failure of the few attempts to introduce behavioural objectives into curriculum innovation (Kelly, 1982) educators have shown a reluctance to view their task solely in terms of the achievement of prespecified learning outcomes. Bull (1985) has advanced a number of moral objections to the behaviourist position which underpins competence-based assessment, the chief of which is that pre-determined objectives of this kind stress only the instrumental value of learning and thus foster an impoverished view of educational activity and human potential. Systems employing such objectives are not only, 'inimical to the real structure of knowledge' but are also founded on a 'controversial theory of human activities' (pp.77,79) and have a tendency to stifle creative development and openness in teacher-student relationships.

The extension of the idea of competence to incorporate under-pinning knowledge and understanding can be seen as a tacit acknowledgement of the inadequacies of the epistemological and methodological foundation of competence-based strategies, and also a recognition that such approaches are too narrowly focussed to capture fully all that is required of quality VET. The CBI report (1989,op.cit.) pointed out that a serious shortcoming of the British system of VET was a failure to provide a good general educational foundation on which to build vocational training. There is now a broad consensus on the need for a 'common core' basis for VET with, as Maclure notes, BTEC, HMI and the National Curriculum Council all calling for post-16 programmes which incorporate a 'core of related knowledge, skills, qualities and attitudes'(op.cit;p.38). The recent National Council of Vocational Qualifications document on general NVQs is a further endorsement of this position.

All this serves to confirm what many educators claim to have known for years , namely, that a good general education is all that employers really want (Guy,1991) and that specific vocational preparation needs to be built upon a generalist foundation rather than constructed in isolation from it. The NVQ revolution can be interpreted as an attempt to alter the balance between the vocational and the academic by emphasising the practical at the expense of the intellectual. It is now realised that this was misguided and far too simplistic, and the recent announcements about general NVQs (which, without further modifications and changes, are still, in my view, not up

to the task; Hyland,1992b) can be regarded as a belated attempt to put matters right in this respect.

All these developments make the cardinal error of accepting and underscoring the basic distinction between vocational-academic and general-practical pursuits. If genuine reconciliation between the traditions is to be achieved the very basis of this distinction needs to be criticised and re-contextualised, and it is in this area that Dewey's theories of vocationalism provide such a useful source of ideas.

Dewey's Theory of Knowledge and Vocationalism

Reference was made earlier to the origins of the vocational/academic divide in the 19th century gentleman ideal based on a classical education. This ideal itself rested on Platonic foundations supplemented by the writings of British post-Cartesian philosophers such as Locke and Hume. According to this tradition, knowledge is essentially something which is acquired through rational reflection, and even the empiricists attempted to pursue truth by means of a fairly passive spectatorial role (Hamlyn, 1987,p.134). The pursuit of this 'genuine' knowledge is, on this account, accorded a higher status (and, by implication, also those, like Plato's philosopher-kings, engaged in this activity) than the involvement in more practical endeavours. As Schofield (1972) notes, it was this tradition which gave rise to the notion that only disinterested knowledge has specific associations with the general culture' (p.152), and this led to a rather one-sided view of what a general education should contain.

The foundation of Dewey's epistemology is built upon the anti-Cartesian position originally developed by C.S.Peirce and later refined and modified by William James (Quinton,1977). Labelled by Dewey himself as 'instrumentalism', this position differs in a number of important respects from the Cartesian tradition. Unlike the passive spectator of Cartesianism, Dewey envisages an active pursuer and constructor of knowledge, working and interacting with others in a world of social beings and human products (Quinton,ibid;pp.3-4). Knowledge and truth are neither given nor absolute, but constructed by humans out of their 'experience'. This concept of experience - which for Dewey is the 'name given to all that passes between the organism and its surroundings' (Geiger,1958,p.17) - holds a central position in Dewey's epistemology. It is through experience that inquiry, or the pursuit of knowledge, is to be conducted and, in Dewey's hands, this becomes a very practical activity directed towards the solving of problems and the removal of obstacles in the way of general social progress.

Dewey had a passion for the unification of ideas (Peters,1977) and argued cogently against the prevalence of either/or 'isms' in educational theory. One of his major objectives was to break down the false dichotomy between the notions that 'education is development from within'or that it is 'formation from without' (Dewey,1963,p.17). Instead of this artificial opposition, educational activity is to be organised as 'intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience' (ibid;p.89).

Whitehead argued that the 'antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is

fallacious' (1962,p.74) and, in a similar way, Dewey attacked 20th century practice on the grounds that it had become 'highly specialized, one-sided and narrow'. It was an education:

> dominated almost entirely by the medieval conception of learning...something which appeals for the most part to the intellectual aspect of our natures...not to our impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or art. (Dewey, 1965,p.26)

These sentiments would probably be fully endorsed by the current training lobby in Britain but, unlike certain extreme NVQ enthusiasts (see Fleming,1991), Dewey did not want to replace one extremism with another but, rather, sought to break down tbe 'antithesis of vocational and cultural education' based on the false oppositions of 'labour and leisure, theory and practice, body and mind' (Dewey,1966,p.301).

This task is to be achieved by introducing into the curriculum the practical activities which Dewey called 'occupations'. An occupation is a 'mode of activity...which reproduces or runs parallel to some form of work carried on in social life' (Dewey, 1965,p.132), and this notion of occupational activity – the 'continuous organisation of power along certain general lines' (ibid; p.138) – figures prominently in the recommendations for vocational education.

The idea of a vocation as something which 'signifies any form of continuous activity which renders service to others and engages personal powers on behalf of the accomplishment of results' (Dewey,1966,p.139) is a broad one which, instead of standing in opposition to leisure and cultural pursuits, is made to embrace them. Such a conception includes:

> 'the development of artistic capacity of any kind, of specific scientific ability, of effective citizenship, as well as professional and business occupations, to say nothing of mechanical labour or engagement in gainful pursuits' (ibid; p.307)

This vocational perspective is founded squarely on Dewey's pragmatic theory of knowledge which strenuously maintains the 'continuity of knowing with an activity which purposely modifies the environment' (ibid; p.344).

The emphasis on the practical is carried over into the proposals for a vocational curriculum. There is an insistence that the 'only adequate training <u>for</u> occupations is <u>through</u> occupations' (ibid; p.310). Dewey was a fierce critic of the ideas being recommended by Snedden for American public education in the early years of the century which saw vocational education in terms of 'social efficiency', the preparation of students for particular occupational roles (Lewis,1991). Instead, Dewey advocated a broad conception of vocationalism which was neither narrowly-focussed nor occupationally-specific but which allowed for a 'genuine discovery of personal aptitudes so that proper choice of a specialized pursuit in later life may be indicated' (ibid; p.311). This connects well with Dewey's preference for a pedagogy which exploits the learner's interest and experience and, ideally, has relevance to the solution of practical problems (Peters,1977).

Dewey puts forward two main arguments against a narrowly-conceived vocational education, both of which have direct relevance to the contemporary debate about education and training in this country. First, when 'educators conceive vocational guidance as something which leads to a definitive, irretrievable and complete choice, both education and the chosen vocation are likely to be rigid, hampering further growth (1966,op.cit;p.311). More importantly, however, the needs of a constantly evolving industrial society can never be met by narrow skills training which neglects aspects of general education. Dewey was convinced that

> any scheme for vocational education which takes its point of departure from the industrial regime that now exists, is likely to assume and to perpetuate its divisions and weaknesses, and thus to become an instrument in accomplishing the feudal dogma of social predestination (ibid; p.318).

As Tozer and Nelson note, since Dewey's approach 'had as its primary objective, not the preparation for a particular occupation or even a specific range of occupations, but intellectual and moral growth' (1989,p.29), his system seems to be well suited to the fluid labour markets of post-Fordist economies.

Conclusion: Education and Vocation

Dewey's idea of what it is to have a vocation and his proposals for vocational education have much of value to offer those educators and trainers presently concerned with bridging the vocational/academic divide. The central point about vocational preparation being on all fours with general education for life in society, though basic, is never too trivial to mention. By stressing the value of 'education which acknowledges the full intellectual and social meaning of a vocation'(1966,op.cit;p.318), Dewey reminds us just how important it is to remove the damaging prejudices and dualisms which currently bedevil the education system.

The ideas about occupational activities and vocational pursuits
are underpinned by an integrated and holistic conception of knowledge, understanding and skills of the kind which informs many of the recent suggestions for VET curriculum reform. The CBI 'core skills' programme seeks to provide that basic grounding which is thought to be missing from general education, and the RSA arguments for a British baccalaureate are designed to achieve the blending of the theoretical and the practical which is at the heart of Dewey's educational philosophy. The links Dewey makes between vocational preparation and effective citizenship are also worth noting in the light of the recent revival of interest (both educational and political!) in this field in the last few years (Hyland,1991c).

Above all, Dewey's attack on either/or dichotomies in education captures perfectly the present spirit of reconciliation in the VET sphere. As Hodkinson has recently suggested, the confusion and conflation of ideas in the education/training debate - between the traditional and the progressive, and between instrumentalism and education for its own sake - has obscured the fact that the 'liberal educators and progressive trainers have actually got much in common' (1991,p.86).

There is, sad to say, very little of Dewey's spirit of vocationalism present in the government proposals for post-16 reform which helped to shape the Further and Higher Education Act. With the best will in the world the retention of the A level 'gold standard' will tend to perpetuate the old divisions (Nash,1991), thus maintaining a second-class status for vocational studies and frustrating the whole purpose of the proposed new ordinary and advanced diplomas. Moreover, the choice of an NVQ model for the upgrading of VET fails to take account of the inherent weaknesses of competence-based strategies. Employer-defined standards and criteria may produce highly suitable occupationally-specific work skills, but fostering such skills needs to be distinguished from providing well-founded vocational education (Lewis,op.cit.). Even the proposed general NVQs seem to fall some way short of offering a clearly-defined and coherent vocational education programme as opposed to the attempt to re-work NVQs in the hope of giving them parity of esteem with academic studies (Hyland,1992b). All of these recent developments seem unable to avoid the damaging polarising tendencies of which Dewey was so critical. The attempt to separate adult education 'vocational' courses from so-called 'leisure' courses in the current government scheme (attacked by NIACE, 1991) is symptomatic of the dangerous schizophrenia which underpins such a polarised educational value system.

Maclure rightly calls for a coherent national system of education and training for all young people up to the age of 18 (op.cit;p.87) but with the stress on market forces, training credits and a multiplicity of agencies competing for post-16 students (Jackson,1991). This is precisely what the government proposals fail to provide. Certainly, there is nothing to suggest that the planned reforms are likely to produce VET systems of the quality and status as the French and German systems so widely admired by British educators and trainers.

Lewis claims that VET is almost universally viewed in social class terms which accord inferior status to vocational pursuits, and describes this as the 'historical problem of vocational education'(op.cit;p.96). Perhaps this problem will never be overcome in Britain until proposed reforms are accompanied by a value shift which transforms the rhetoric of the 1988 Education Reform Act promise of a 'balanced and broadly based' curriculum entitlement for all pupils into an educational reality. After over a century of state provision we are still struggling to achieve a system of mass popular education in which such a conception of entitlement and equity has genuine application. A declaration to increase post-school participation rates within a system which leaves intact the divisive academic/vocational culture (now likely to be re-interpreted as a split between A levels and GNVQs) has little value.

Dewey was absolutely clear about the damaging and potentially disastrous effects of educational systems which provide a narrow technical education for the many and a 'traditional liberal or cultural education for the few'(1966,op.cit;p.319). What we need is a philosophical perspective which, in addition to providing a coherent educational alternative to the status quo (perhaps in terms of Bailey's concept of 'liberal education', 1984, or in the form of what Silver and Brennan, 1988, call a 'liberal vocationalism'), regards education as essentially a social activity which aims at the general preparation of young people for all aspects of adult life. Dewey offers us such a vision, and if those currently engaged in the current debate on VET reform would only take time to

read through a copy of Democracy and Education, this rich social and educational perspective might be used to guide post-school reconstruction.

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7 CONTRACTUALISM: THE MODERN ALTERNATIVE TO LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

Richard G Bagnall

Abstract

This paper critically examines the principal assumptions underlying a contract-based approach to curriculum development ('contractualism') in university continuing education. Contractualism draws its inspiration from economic rationalist ideology, which emphasises effectiveness and efficiency, and presupposes a model of persons as atomistic, autonomous, egoistic, deracinated, mechanistically rational maximisers of their own, essentially material, interests. The following assumptions of contractualism are questioned: the efficacy of education as a private commodity; the efficacy of enlightened self-interest; the individualistic view of humanity; the sufficiency of educational functionalism; the specifiability of educational outcomes; client awareness of their best interests; client understanding of the procedural alternatives; the essentially empowering nature of the framework; the complementarity of extra-university programs; and that of open learning programs.

To the extent that these assumptions fail in the ways identified in the critique, the quality of contractualist curricula may be diminished through: curricular simplification, fragmentation, inflexibility and orthodoxy; conceptual situationalism; procedural inflexibility; heightened inequality; and individualistic functionalism. It is suggested that contractualism may be both insufficient and inappropriate as an approach to curriculum development in this context.

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Adult or continuing education in Australian universities has had a chequered history of marginal involvement and fluctuating institutional commitment. It has, though, been informed and structured by academic values similar to those which have guided the credit work of the host institutions, albeit with somewhat more egalitarian and populist leanings. These value frameworks have traditionally been essentially liberal. Over the last decade, however there has been a progressive movement of university continuing education provision towards a framework the values of which are essentially market-based, commercial, entrepreneurial and contractual (Australian Association of Adult and Community Education, 1989; Bagnall, 1989; Caldwell & Heslop, 1989).

This paper focuses upon this recent evolution of contract-based curriculum development – henceforth here termed 'contractualism'. Courses are formulated through negotiation with selected publics or interest groups (professional associations, business houses, trades unions, etc.) and are generally offered and marketed selectively or exclusively to those selected publics. The public interest thus effectively operates only in the selection of the publics for contractual negotiation. The curriculum is directed to addressing special interests; public interest is satisfied only incidentally, if it is at all.

Contractualism draws its inspiration from economic rationalism, which is rooted firmly in neoclassical economic theory and the ideological tradition of classical individualism (Macpherson, 1977; Norton, 1991). It is based on a model of persons as atomistic, autonomous, egoistic, deracinated, mechanistically rational maximisers of their own, essentially material, interests. Society is viewed as an aggregation of such individuals and the cultural artefacts that they have created. Normatively, the ideal society is seen as a freely competitive, utilitarian system which minimally structures incentives and restraints through a democratically representative political framework, the purpose of which is to moderate any antisocial excesses of otherwise unfettered enlightened self-interest. The normative role of government is therefore seen as being minimally constraining and restraining to the actions of its citizens. The central metaphor of the ideal society is that of the market place, in which individuals and collectivities freely compete for goods and services to satisfy their wants by rationally maximising their interests through their productive effort. Calculations of individual and social utility or value (whether this be time, goods, services, goals, or competencies, etc.) are made through common currency of economic value. Persons also are therefore viewed as economic resources: 'human capital' or 'human resources'. In a society of free, rational maximisers of their individual and collective self-interest, it is expected that a high value will be placed on education – albeit only of such forms as will instrumentally enhance each person's acquisitive (essentially material) success.

Central to economic rationalist thinking is the belief that rational maximisers of their own interests will, as an empirical matter, act in the most efficient and effective manner to obtain their wants. Since social institutions – such as that of education – are considered, normatively, to exist for the purpose of minimally regulating the free exchange of goods and services among the citizenry, it is taken as a matter of moral faith that all such social institutions should be maximally efficient and effective in fulfilling their particular institutional tasks. Efficiency and effectiveness are thus central concepts of this social philosophy, in education as in all other fields of human

interaction.

The function of education, then, is to maximise the ('human') capital value of persons, in the most effective and efficient manner, for the pursuit of their individual and collective goals within a utilitarian framework. Contractualism is seen as being a process central to the achievement of this function: it capitalises upon and reinforces the economic rationalist values of individualism, autonomy, self-interest, instrumentalism, rationality, and material acquisitiveness; it gives concrete expression to the concept of the market-place as the institution for the exchange of education commodified as an economic resource; and, through the market forces that are therein brought into play, education as an activity is seen as tending to be maximally effective and efficient.

In the present abbreviated critique, I focus on the key assumptions that are made in contractualism, questioning the veracity of those assumptions and, in some cases, their normative value. I then draw together its possible negative educational effects. The critique is undertaken in the context of a general social movement towards contractualism. That context is presupposed and no effort is made to present the arguments in its favour.

University adult or continuing education is here taken broadly as including any university program that is not an integral part of the university's award courses, and that is designed for the purpose (wholly or partly) of facilitating learning in persons normally regarded as adult.

The Educational Assumptions of Contractualism

To the extent that our structuring of educational provision and engagement is informed by contractualism, we must act within the following framework of assumptions about the educational enterprise.

(a) The Efficacy of Education as a Private Commodity

Contractualism is based on a view of education as a marketable commodity which can be bought and sold for individual or collective gain or benefit. Any acquisition of this commodity is seen as an essentially private gain – one which benefits the individual learners through, particularly, enhancing their employability, earning capacity, or social status, and the efficiency and effectiveness with which they work. These gains (or educational 'outcomes') may then be 'sold' in the 'market place' through the consequential gaining of employment, higher income, etc. Public demand for any particular learned skill will then be met through demand and supply setting an appropriate monetary value on those 'human resources' which can demonstrate that they have learned the skill. A high monetary value (earning potential) is seen as an inducement to individuals to pay the cost of acquiring the skills demanded. Those individuals who acquire the skills are then in a position to sell their expertise, and thereby to contribute to the meeting of public demand. Accordingly, the primary beneficiary of all such education (i.e., of all education that has any value) is seen as being the individual. Rationally, it is argued, the primary beneficiary – the individual,

not the general public or the state – should pay the cost of education.

Two important arguments may be mounted against this assumption. First it may be argued that education is importantly a public as well as a private good, and that this is especially the case in the sort of liberal democratic system that is presupposed in modern forms of economic rationalism. An educated – and hence an informed, sensitive, intelligent and skilled – citizenry is surely more likely than is an ill-educated one to understand and respond appropriately to the values that underlie the socio-political system. Education, while certainly including some private good, and opportunities for instrumental private gain, is importantly a public good, and one which should, accordingly, be supported by the public through the state.

Secondly, it may be argued that education – at least to a certain level – is an individual right (e.g.: Cohen, 1981; Paterson, 1979). It is a right not just in the negative sense of freedom from the interference of others or the State in one's chosen educational pursuits – that right is certainly not denied by contractualism. Rather, it is a positive or 'welfare' right to support in one's educational endeavours. Given that education is so central to our development as persons, does not a humane society have the duty to its citizens to support them in their educational efforts to so develop? Such a right might be argued, as does Paterson (1979), to include continuing education through the universities.

In any event, the assumption that the contracting clientele should pay the full market cost of the educational services for which they are contracting has the obvious consequence of favouring those individuals and groups who are both able and willing to meet such costs.

(b) The Efficacy of Enlightened Self-Interest

Contractualism, within the constraints imposed by the principles of effectiveness and efficiency, is seen as being driven by enlightened self-interest. Through this concept – which is fundamental to rationalist economic thought – it is assumed:(1) that the good of individuals is best attained by their acting as free agents, in an informed manner, entirely for the maximisation of their own interests;(2) that the good of society is best defined as the additive good of its component individuals, within a framework of social utilitarianism; and (3) that society should seek to restrain and constrain individual and collective freedom only where the exercise of that freedom is seen to adversely affect the freedom of other individuals. Modern versions of this concept add more of a role for society in correcting past discriminative injustice, but the framework is essentially the same.

This concept is inadequate as an intentional framework for education, in the absence of traditional moral principles constraining educators to work for the educational interests of their students. Enlightened self-interest constrained only by the principles of efficiency and effectiveness may be more likely to lead to the subversion of educational intention than to its maximally effective and efficient attainment. An informed educator who is acting within this framework should immediately appreciate the value of such measures as: client selection on the basis of the likelihood of their

attaining the educational goals at minimal cost; selective conditioning to high performance on outcome measures; and non-educational assistance to attain consequential social outcomes (Apling, 1989; Johnes & Taylor, 1991).

Procedurally, enlightened self-interest in a contractualist framework may be expected to discriminate in favour of persons who can most skilfully and forcefully articulate and pursue their interests or concerns. Again, the less well educated are proportionately the most disadvantaged.

The demands of contractualism for such practical knowledge may also be expected to favour potential clientele who are organised in or through groups or organisations of some sort. The collective knowledge of a group – especially when divided into interrelated specialisations, as is the case with formal organisations – will generally be much greater than the knowledge of an individual acting in his or her own interests. This favouring of clientele groups over individuals may also be enhanced through groups allowing the distribution and possible re-allocation of educational costs, and by the tendency for contract-based programs to be offered privately to the contracting parties, rather than publicly to interested individuals.

(c) The Individualistic View of Humanity

The descriptive model of persons that is presupposed by contractualism is flawed, both in what it includes and in what it leaves out. People are on the whole not mechanistically rational in the single-minded pursuit of their own self-interest. Rather, their actions are governed by a complex web of cultural traditions, mores, expectations, beliefs, norms, and perceptual frameworks. They are social, especially educational, creations of the societies in which they have participated. They are autonomous only within the constraints of their belief systems; and they are self-seeking only to the extent that their normative framework encourages or permits it. A preoccupation with effectiveness and efficiency, at the expense of cultural traditions, is a human aberration, rather than a characteristic. On their own, effectiveness and efficiency are absurdly regressive and dismissive of cultural tradition and inheritance. The utilitarian goal of happiness, whether narrowly hedonistic or more broadly ideal (Smart & Williams, 1973) is certainly a commonly desired state of being, but its maximisation as the aim of human existence is surely a ludicrous over-simplification. Human action is normally, and much more importantly, undertaken on the basis of a vast complexity of factors in the pursuit of individual identity, cultural and social belongingness, individual and social achievement, virtue and spiritual worth, as well as safety, security, and material well-being. We seldom choose to act solely on the basis of the egoistic maximisation of our perceived self-interest; and we would be much the less human if we did so.

The normative model of society is similarly wrong-headed, largely because it is based on such an inadequate view of humanity. Economic value is not sufficient to serve as a common measure of all that is of value in society. The market-place is entirely inadequate as a model of valued forms of cultural exchange. The maximisation of efficiency and effectiveness would be extremely destructive of cultural tradition. Representative democracy and minimalist government are quite inadequate as social

and moral frameworks for the maintenance and enhancement of humanity in its humanness. Persons are autonomous individuals only in a very limited biological sense – as persons we are participating elements of extensive and historical, educational, social, spiritual and broadly cultural traditions. We each exist as an individual only within these traditions. The economic commodification of persons through education is a reduction of our status as persons, and it denies us much of our defining culture.

(d) The Sufficiency of Educational Functionalism

Arising directly from rationalist economic theory, education within a contractualist framework is seen as a means to the solution of individual and social problems. It is thus seen as being essentially and sufficiently both functional, in that its purpose is to meet learning 'needs', and instrumental, in that it is seen as a means to the solution of problems that give rise to those needs. Education, then, is a resource to be used in the attainment of other ends – a means to the attainment of extrinsic ends – not an end in itself.

Such a view of education, while clearly of great practical value, is severely limited in its epistemic, developmental, illuminative and critical value. Education as the development of human potential is a contrary notion to that of educational functionalism, indeed the two are incommensurable. Effectiveness and efficiency as principles deny any intrinsic value to the educational engagement itself – a view which is clearly opposed to that liberal tradition within the modern university in which education is seen as having considerable intrinsic value, and the educational business of the university is seen as being the pursuit of excellence in terms of those intrinsic criteria of value (Hinkson, 1987; Lawson, 1979; Paterson, 1979).

(e) The Specifiability of Educational Outcomes

Within an economic rationalist framework, contractualism depends upon the intended outcomes of the negotiated educational program being clearly and precisely specifiable, a priori, as the program goals. To the extent that the intended outcomes are not so specifiable, calculations of effectiveness and efficiency cannot be made to any acceptable degree of reliability and validity. Clarity and precision in this context require that an educational outcome be: precisely analysable into its component parts; reliably observable as some change in learner behaviour; reliably quantifiable; and essentially unchanging over the course of the total educational engagement.

Is it not the case, however, that many educational outcomes of the greatest importance may only be described in general, qualitative terms, are not consistently associated with any particular change in learner behaviour, and are likely to evolve or change in the course of an educational engagement? And are not such outcomes particularly likely to be those that we associate most centrally with the quality of being human, especially within a liberal democratic framework – outcomes such as those of the human and intellectual virtues, practical wisdom, individuality, respect for self and others, creativity, responsibility and self– sufficiency?

(f) Client Awareness of their Best Interests

It is assumed in contractualism that the potential clients are sufficiently aware of their own best interests to engage in the negotiation of programs to address those interests. In other words, it is assumed that the articulated "wants" or "felt needs" (Archambault, 1957, p.41; Monette, 1977, p.117) of the negotiating clientele – individuals, groups or organisations – can serve as an adequate foundation on which to design the curriculum. However, the learning interests and concerns identified in this process are likely to be restricted to perspectives and conceptual frameworks already familiar to the contracting clientele party (Phillips, 1973; Winch, 1957). Alternative perspectives and conceptual frameworks, because unknown to the contracting personnel, may not be considered.

In terms of the educational goals and content identified, contractualism thus presents the paradox of the learner making decisions on what he or she should best learn, before knowing the dimension of that learning (Candy, 1987; James, 1956; Lawson, 1979). Decisions on educational content and goals to address the identified concerns and interests may therefore be expected to fall within traditional and familiar frameworks of solutions Phillips, 1973; Winch, 1957).

(g) Client Understanding of the Procedural Alternatives

In so far as the educational client, through the negotiation of the educational contract, has control over the educational processes, it is also apparent that the client is assumed to have an understanding of the content to be learned and the goals to be attained, sufficient to take an informed stand on how that content may be best learned and the goals attained.

This assumption is, however, clearly untenable. Not only is an educational client likely to be ignorant of, or less familiar with, a number of alternative educational approaches; he or she clearly does not possess a knowledge of the content to be learned from which to make an intelligent judgement about how best to learn that content.

(h) The Essentially Empowering Nature of the Framework

Contractualism is premised on the belief that it is by nature empowering to those adults who participate as its clients. This empowerment is thought to arise from the demands placed upon the clients for them to identify, clarify, articulate, negotiate, and collaboratively address their educational wants. The responsiveness of contractualism to the value frameworks of the clients further suggests that this empowerment would facilitate the development of educational pluralism. This belief may well be true, but only for an already educationally advantaged sector of the adult population. The wise identification of concerns, and the negotiation of educational solutions to them, are themselves dependent upon a sound knowledge of alternatives.

(i) The Complementarity of Extra-University Programs

A further foundation of contractualism appears to be the belief that there is now so

much information readily available to the adult public, in such a diversity of forms – books, films, television, radio, videotapes, computer networks, etc. – and that schooling is now so generally engaged in, and of such a high quality, that there is no longer any need for general or liberal continuing education. Adults are seen as having the autonomy (including the educational autonomy) to manage their own continuing education, except in special areas of rapid change or major difficulty, for which learning is best arranged through contractualism anyway.

There is however no sound basis for believing that our schools are equipping more than a small minority of their graduates with adequate knowledge for autonomous learning. Autonomy in learning is, in any event, context and subject specific, rather than generalisable (Bagnall, 1987; Gibbs, 1979). There is also, and even more importantly, a social necessity for universities to be actively involved in helping their wider communities to integrate, interpret, structure, organise, give meaning to, and critically evaluate the mass of information which is otherwise available. The traditional intellectual values of university scholarship – lost in contractualism – are essential to this task.

(j) The Complementarity of University Open Learning Program

Contractualism also draws its justification from the belief that in-depth programs in non-instrumental fields such as the humanities are now readily available, to a degree that they previously were not, through adult participation in formal university degree and diploma courses. Much more open access, with courses available for either credit or audit study is argued to be the norm in Australian universities. Such access is now further enhanced with the widespread availability of credit courses or components of courses through external study or distance education. It is, therefore, perfectly acceptable that other programs of university outreach should be essentially instrumental, superficial, and otherwise of the nature here suggested as characterising contract-based curricula.

Undoubtedly there is some warrant for this belief, as is indicated, for example, in studies of adult participation levels in university courses (Anwyl, Powles & Patrick, 1987; Percy, 1985; West, Hore, Eaton, & Kermond, 1986), and as is indicated in the publicity given by universities to their various mature-age entry schemes, 'late-start' courses, and other programs designed to facilitate adult entry to and success in university study. However, such provision is by no means a substitute for the losses from continuing education provision that may be expected to occur under contract-based curriculum development.

Possible Negative Effects of Contractualism

To the extent that the foregoing assumptions of contractualism do in fact fail in the ways indicated, the potential and actual quality of the educational curriculum that is developed within this framework may be diminished in the following sorts of ways.

(a) Curricular Simplification

With the exception of educational conservatives, educators of all persuasions (e.g.: Brookfield, 1985; Dewey, 1961; Freire, 1972; Monette, 1979; Phillips, 1973; Winch, 1957) regard the critical and informed questioning of assumptions, beliefs and values that underlie expressed needs, and that underpin the social context in which wants have been generated, as a goal of the highest educational importance. This goal may not be readily achieved through contractualism, since the perspectives necessary for such questioning may not be known to the educational clients.

Contractualist curricula, because of their focus on the solution of perceived problems, may be expected to concentrate heavily on the learning of solutions to those problems, and of strategies for their solution – that is, to focus variously on technical or practical knowledge, depending upon the nature of the problems being addressed. Theoretical and experiential knowledge, although central to liberal and humanistically–based curricula, are likely to have little place, except in so far as they are seen to be instrumental to the learning of problem solutions or problem–solving strategies.

Contractualism may thus be seen as favouring training – as the learning of problem–solving skills, routines and strategies – over education – as the critical exploration of existing knowledge in all of its forms (Brookfield, 1985; Lawson, 1979, pp 105–108; Paterson, 1979, p46). In the present climate of technical vocationalism – in which satisfying and rewarding employment is equated with the acquisition of technologically–based vocational skills – this training may also be largely perceived in immediately vocational terms.

Contractualism therein also tends to exclude educational initiatives and programs that are rooted in the academic disciplines. As has been argued elsewhere (Candy, 1987; Phillips, 1973), the criteria, standards and skills necessary to judge the value of disciplinary knowledge are largely intrinsic to each discipline. They can be used intelligently only by persons who have a reasonable education in the disciplines concerned. They cannot be intelligently understood or applied a priori, as is required in contract–based curriculum development. Contractualism is therein a procedure for the development of curricula that are strongly divergent from liberal education ideals (for which see: Bagnall, 1990a; Cohen, 1981, pp.73–84; Lawson, 1979; O'Hear, 1981).

In its focus on the immediately perceived problems and concerns of the contracting clients, the curriculum perspective of contractualism will tend also to be upon short–term futures. Not only is there likely to be a discounting of the accumulated wisdom of past civilisations, but the future perspective is likely to be restricted to that of immediate gratification.

(b) Curricular Fragmentation

Curricular fragmentation may arise from any structural selectivity or distortion of educational goals, itself resulting from any failure of the educational outcomes to be fully specifiable (with respect to outcome analysability, observability and quantifiability).

Perhaps more seriously, fragmentation may arise even in the ideal situation where all of the important educational goals are specifiable in the desired terms. Educators have traditionally worked to use education in helping their students to confront the challenges, crises and interests which they experience in their individual searches for a sense of identity and belongingness in society. Those developmental searches, and the societal contexts in which they are conducted, therefore give coherence, depth and meaning to each particular educational program in which a student engages. Contractualism will, however, tend reductively to replace the search, and the discoveries that arise therein, with sets of achievable outcomes, each of which can be specified beforehand. In other words, the curriculum of contractualist education may be essentially fragmentary.

(c) Curricular Inflexibility

The curricula of contractualist education are likely to be relatively inflexible – unresponsive to change in the learners, or to the educators' knowledge of their students, in the course of the program. The contracted pre-determination of educational objectives, and the selection of efficient approaches by which to attain them, are inimical to flexibility with respect to goals or activities within a program. Such flexibility, though, is otherwise seen as a central principle of good educational practice.

(d) Curricular Orthodoxy

Contractualism may also be expected to encourage curricular orthodoxy (Phillips, 1973). In this regard, contractualism presents a special case of educational justification in terms of its instrumental outcomes (Bagnall, 1990b; Lawson, 1979, p.45). A situation in which a client negotiates with a continuing education unit for services to solve a problem or address a felt need may not be one conducive to the adoption of a radical or experimental curriculum to solve that problem or meet that need. The possible and clearly perceived consequences of failing to so achieve the agreed end may be expected to encourage the use, wherever possible, of curriculum content and procedures with which staff and their clients are familiar, and for which the likely outcomes are well known on the basis of past experience and research.

There may tend, similarly, to be a favouring of organisational interests over those of individuals. This would arise most clearly as a consequence, first, of the already noted favouring of clients who have the capacity to pay the full costs of the contracted services and, secondly, from the demands of contractualism for clients who have the skills and resources to articulate and press their interest. Such capacities and resources are likely to be disproportionately represented in and through complex organisations.

(e) Conceptual Situationalism

In contractualism's focus on the solution of client problems and the meeting of their articulated wants, there is pressure to aggregate, and to regard equally, various otherwise distinct categories of problem-solving and wants-meeting activities.

Contractualism may thereby contribute significantly to the breaking down of important conceptual distinctions, such as those between teaching and learning; education and research; and learning and the application of that learning to social or industrial problems. As has been argued elsewhere, with any such loss of discriminability there is a parallel loss of the intellectual and practical power which it otherwise affords (Bagnall, 1990c; Lawson, 1982).

Contractualism fails to provide any guidance on the nature of continuing education – its similarities to and differences from other, related, social activities, such as recreation, social work, publicity, recruitment, social action, training and indoctrination. It thereby fails also to provide any guidance on what it is that makes any activity more or less one of education. Accordingly, curricula developed through this means may be only incidentally educational, non-educational, or anti-educational on any considered conception of the nature of education.

(f) Procedural Indefinability

Methodoiogically, contractualism provides no guidance as to which courses of action are more or less appropriate, or more or less undesirable (Monette,1979). Accordingly, activities may be undertaken to the end of attaining the negotiated goals, but which are contrary to the academic and humane values of the university and its contributing fields of scholarship.

Similarly, contractualism provides an inadequate philosophical framework within which, and upon which, to choose, formulate, and justify one's actions as an educator (Brookfield, 1985; Monette, 1979).

Contractualism provides no guidance on these matters beyond those personal principles that constrain each of the educators involved.

(g) Heightened Inequality

Inequality may be reinforced by contractualism most strongly through its instrumentalism and its processes of curriculum development. Education is presented through contractualism primarily as a means of enhancing one's relative position: through the solution of problems impeding one's progress, satisfying one's desires for vocational or organisational advancement, etc. To the extent that it does so enhance one's position relative to that of others, it will favour those persons who are already educationally favoured in this way, since they are the potential clients who have most refined, through education, the skills involved in identifying and advocating their wants. They are also the persons who are most likely to value education for the advantage that it brings – and hence to be inclined to pay for it, and to have the discretionary income to do so (Candy,1987).

(h) Individualistic Functionalism

In addition to the foregoing curricular, procedural and social implications, contractualism may be expected to have an impact on the value frameworks of those

persons who are affected by it. In particular, its direct impact may be expected to enhance the values of instrumental learning, self interest, consumerism and conservatism, while diminishing those of understanding as an end in itself, altruism, non-material ends and progressivism.

We should not lose sight of the point that our education contributes importantly to our very formation as persons. If our education systems are structured on assumptions such as that we are best regarded as mechanistic and self-centred economic resources, then our education will contribute to forming us into mechanistic and self-centred economic resources.

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8

THE LIBERAL TRADITION:HOW LIBERAL? ADULT EDUCATION, THE ARTS AND MULTICULTURALISM

David J Jones

Introduction

In this paper I argue that the liberal tradition was, in fact, narrow, paternalistic and serving the interests of a dominant culture which was white, male and largely European. Drawing on personal experience I demonstrate how the liberal tradition, far from being liberal or liberating, constrained thought and inhibited cultural development and cultural diversity. The piece is written in the first person because it represents a very subjective process of discovery. I begin by describing how adult education students led me to question the dominant value systems which I had inherited from my own education and training and to reject these as a basis for adult learning in the arts. I go on to show how teaching in the arts has generally served the interests of the dominant culture and how this state of affairs, for most of the twentieth century, can be traced to the pre-eminence of the liberal tradition.

Values

During the early sixties I was a student at Leeds College of Art where I studied painting and pottery. I still think of that education as providing one of the best liberal educations one could wish for. Nowadays, however, I have also to acknowledge that it was firmly rooted within a European tradition of art education which owed a lot to work done in the Bauhaus in pre-war Germany.

I left college having acquired a range of skills and having been inducted into a set of aesthetic values which were to inform the judgements I made in my teaching about what was good and what was bad art. I was confident that I could distinguish the good from the mediocre.

I began teaching in adult education and adopted methods and procedures borrowed from my own education. I would set exercises in drawing or painting and at the end of each lesson we would have a 'crit'. Students would gather round, put up the day's work, and we would discuss it. Or rather I, as teacher, would pronounce judgement upon it and invite comment from the class. It was not long before my judgements were challenged. Why is that one good and that other one bad? What criteria are you using?

This is where it began to get difficult. Following the judgements handed down by my own tutors, I would say that it is good because it is 'unified' or 'expressive' or, worst of all, 'meaningful'. 'But why does being unified make it good?' they would reply, and cite paintings which were very fragmented but also considered to be 'good' art.

What is obvious now, but was not so obvious then, is that I was making fairly subjective aesthetic value judgements based on the value system which had informed my own education and training.

It did not strike me until much later that there were many competing aesthetic value systems, each rooted in its own cultural context, and that these value systems each had their own developmental histories.

One of the most painful steps I had to take in my own development as a teacher was to reject the values which for so long had informed my judgements about my own work and my students' work. But the step was inevitable. It had become increasingly clear that those processes which establish or change aesthetic value systems are societal and largely outside the control of the teacher in the classroom. Values were established and, largely, maintained by gallery owners and curators, patrons of the arts, critics and writers in learned journals. These values were not constant; they changed over time. In addition they were culturally determined and many arose from particular ethnic traditions. It was obvious that they were not established by the teacher in the classroom, though it has to be said that teachers often, unknowingly, maintain such value systems.

Where, then, did this leave the teacher? How was it possible to assess student progress and evaluate one's teaching without an aesthetic value system? The answer, when it dawned, was blindingly obvious. I would make judgements, not about the work students had produced, but about the learning that had taken place. The work they had produced might provide some evidence for these judgements, but I would seek evidence from watching students work and from talking to them. I would not be measuring their art products against a previously determined and dominant value system, but rather asking questions about whether or not their perception was developing; whether they were able to generate visual metaphors by working creatively; whether they were using the medium in which they worked in an innovative way; and whether they understood more about the history of art, about the nature of creative process, and about themselves in relation to their work. There was a shift from uni-cultural aesthetic criteria to what were then still called pedagogical criteria. The students themselves were to remain in charge of their own aesthetic. Learning would centre on the processes of creating, not on the products of creation.

This of course was important for students from minority ethnic groups. By imposing a Western European aesthetic I had been forcing them to deny their own cultural roots and adopt an alien one. The new-found approach could accommodate different cultures.

My confidence in my ability to make aesthetic judgements in any objective sort of way was further challenged when I became aware that perception itself is culturally determined.(1) In the end I stopped making aesthetic judgements in my teaching and concentrated on evaluating the progress of students. This approach allowed me to help and encourage students from a wide range of different cultural backgrounds without imposing a set of values which were rooted in white European cultural history. I did, of course, know what I liked, but these personal preferences were acknowledged for what they were and not paraded as an unchallenged value system.

Additionally research work, mainly by Robert Ornstein (2), was suggesting that much of the mental effort for this visual and creative work was located in the right

hemisphere of the brain. It was as though traditional approaches to teaching had been totally ignoring this half of our mental potential. Claims that the aim was to educate the whole person rang hollow in the light of this evidence. Adult education in universities was, at best, only tackling half of the potential of our students.

The Liberal Tradition

Unfortunately, this approach to teaching offended art critics and art historians. The disquiet ultimately ranged much more widely and embraced all art forms. The most vocal were the literary critics. I eventually realised that what I was doing had been labelled multi-culturalism. To me, the approach I had worked out was the logical solution to a series of pedagogical/andragogical problems I had encountered. I was not aware of having made any great sacrifices, of having lost my way or challenged the roots of our heritage. I still had my own aesthetic; I knew what I liked. Ultimately one was drawn more and more to the conclusion that aesthetic judgements were entirely subjective but one also had to acknowledge that the person making those judgements inhabited a particular cultural context with its own history and its own values.

What was uncomfortable about this was that the people levelling these criticisms were some of my adult education heroes; people like Richard Hoggart and Roy Shaw would have none of this new approach. They saw it as challenging the great tradition they were defending; they saw it as somehow at odds with their mission to make the arts available to the man (sic) in the street, to everyone. They saw it as challenging the liberal tradition.

The main root of the dispute lay in the different histories of the various protagonists. On the one hand there was myself arguing as someone who taught people to work creatively, to challenge established norms, to work outside their previous experience of what art is or should be; on the other hand were people who had learned to appreciate English Literature, had derived great pleasure from it and who wanted to share that pleasure. Nothing wrong in that you might think. But unfortunately these people had been trapped in a single culture which was becoming increasing indefensible.

The liberal tradition was mainly a university tradition and as such it had great power. If it was right for those institutions at the pinnacle of our education system to espouse these values, then the values must be sound. They were sound, but they were not the only values. It became increasingly difficult for my opponents in the argument to demonstrate that Beethoven was better than the Beatles, and even more difficult to demonstrate that Beethoven was better than, say, African Drumming or Indian chants. There was a clear case for a pluralistic approach to aesthetic values.

In those days British universities would not even open their doors to creative arts students, with a few notable exceptions. And extra-mural departments were not allowed to teach painting, or to teach people to play a musical instrument, or to act out a play. One could talk about the arts, theorise about the arts, but not do them. This was the worst aspect of the Liberal Tradition. What sort of vested interest was this

tradition protecting? It was, of course, the right of those academics in British universities, mainly white and mainly male, to decide what was good for the rest of us. Decisions were based upon a notion of what the 'educated man' (sic) should know. It is in this sense that the liberal tradition was both paternalistic and narrowly drawn. If anything, it was an illiberal tradition.

Conclusions

Where does all this leave us? In a perverse sort of way, I still believe that the liberal tradition in British adult education was a great movement which opened up opportunities and pleasures for a great many people who otherwise would not have been able to engage with the arts. I have concentrated here on the arts but the argument I have deployed can be used in other subject areas and specialisms. The tradition was too narrow and defended too many sectional interests. The shape and direction of this movement in adult education is now, inevitably, being forced to change.

Moves towards andragogical approaches, towards negotiating the syllabus, towards what is now referred to, not always flatteringly, as multi-culturalism, are moving the liberal tradition forward. From being the narrow illiberal force which constrained much university adult education it is becoming a broader, inclusive rather than exclusive, engine which will drive adult education into a more pluralistic multi-ethnic and a more international twenty-first century. It is necessary to oppose those who would restrict the curriculum of adult education. It is time to celebrate the diversity of culture.

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9 ACCREDITATION: THE DILEMMA OF LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION

Roseanne Benn

> For the individual to find himself in an atmosphere where he is not being evaluated, not being measured by some external standard, is enormously freeing. Evaluation is always a threat, always creates a need for defensiveness.(1)

The dilemma as to whether or not to accredit is one of the major issues facing liberal adult education in Britain today. This paper attempts to present just some of the complex arguments underpinning this debate.

Traditionally liberal adult education in Britain has been premised on non-accreditation. For example, when examining the possible grant-aided contribution of universities, the list of contributions in the Russell Report of 1973 started with 'a continuing provision of liberal studies of the traditional kind, characterised by intellectual effort by the students, the guidance of a tutor with firmly based scholarship, and the customary freedom from externally imposed syllabuses and examinations'(2).

However, since 1979 a radical Conservative Government has been in power. This Government has, without doubt, seen the main aim of all education as meeting manpower requirements. This can be seen clearly in terms of higher education in the policies and thinking outlined in the 1987 White Paper,"Higher Education: Meeting The Challenge". Of the three "aims and purposes of higher education", two concern the economy and only one concerns research and scholarship.(3) Access is defined to mean "taking account of the country's need for highly qualified manpower". In the area of adult education, the 1991 White Paper " Education and Training for the 21st Century" reinforced the manpower role by, for example, promising "continuous education from the age of 5 through education and throughout working life".(4) If all funded education, including liberal adult education, is to have vocational value, then a currency is needed to show the ultimate customer, the employer, the value of the 'goods'. Through National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and their equivalence with General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) and advanced (A) levels, much vocational adult education can be accredited and put on a par with academic qualifications. General NVQs in particular are to be used to accredit core skills. This is of considerable concern to all those involved in liberal adult education. The Government attempted in the 1991 White Paper to remove Central Government funding from most non-examined adult education. Although it has now backed away from this position, many adult educators are seriously concerned for the future of non-accredited adult education and are all, whether from the local education authorities (LEA), the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) or the universities, looking to accredit their courses. This is illustrated by the rapid growth of Open College Federations covering LEA and WEA work and the interest expressed recently by University Departments of Continuing Education in the accreditation of their extramural courses. The National Open College Federation is trying to place its awards on the NVQ/A level matrix, and the universities' increased involvement in a national Credit

Accumulation and Transfer Scheme will give currency to their adult education work.

So the political context in which liberal adult education is operating is now one of accreditation. However, many adult educators are themselves of the liberal, humanist tradition influenced by the British liberal tradition which equates liberal with the freedom from the tyranny of examination; and by the works of thinkers such as Rogers and Knowles. They are motivated in their work by notions of the individual's self-development. Rogers argues, as in the opening passage, that the exposure to evaluation is one of the most dangerous enemies to the development of creativity and that "independence, creativity, and self-reliance are all facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic and evaluation by other is of secondary importance".(5) Similarly Knowles values self-evaluation over teacher-evaluation, being particularly critical of the use of grades.(6) These ideas were reflected in a plea by David Alston(7), a voluntary member of the WEA, for the WEA not to accredit. He argued that "the WEA was founded on a belief in a partnership in learning" and that "this relationship would be threatened by accreditation. Whatever the system of giving credits, the tutor would be closely involved and can come to be seen as an examiner, whose standards the student must meet." He adds that "it must at all times be possible to restate the aims of the class" and that students must be allowed to "pursue what is of importance independently of pre-determined 'learning outcomes'".

Alston also questions the influence of the accrediting body. There is recent experience in Britain with the accreditation of Access to Higher Education Courses. For many of the adult educators teaching on these courses, they epitomized liberal adult education. They were individually designed to meet local needs and were premised on the humanist principles of the worth of the individual and a belief in the capacity of all to grow through education. It is arguable that national validation has performed a valuable service by giving national currency, but at the same time that it has increased costs to the students, greatly increased paperwork and reduced the freedom of the courses to respond to actual student needs. The national accrediting body consists of well-meaning people who pride themselves on their "lightness of touch"; so perhaps the consequences of accreditation are inevitable, no matter how careful the implementation.

A third purpose for adult education, alongside manpower needs and individual self-development, is that of social reform. Arguably this is what attracted many university and WEA tutors into adult education. Here the aim is to develop ideas of citizenship and democracy, to provide adult education for social movements, and hence to foster participation and to contribute to the development of a more egalitarian society.(8) Almost by definition this kind of work may be unaccreditable. Certainly it cannot work with fixed syllabuses. The collective, group approach to emancipatory issues does not lend itself to an evaluation of "how much I achieved, reckoned as a percentage grade". However, it is perhaps not surprising that the dominant purposes in adult education in Britain today are the first two rather than the last. Apart from isolated examples, today's agenda is not a radical one.

The pressure to accredit does not come only from the Government. It would be unwise and perhaps patronising of adult educators to ignore student demand. To give

just one example, Cornwall Educational Guidance Service has identified an unmet demand for accredited courses at the level provided by the WEA and university continuing education.(9) This service is seeing over 5,000 clients a year, of whom 25 per cent wish to study on accredited courses. Cornwall has almost no higher education provision and at the moment the only way to meet this demand is through the Open University or accredited adult education.

Questions are raised, even by supporters of accreditation of liberal adult education. For example, Val Selkirk,(10) whilst supporting the accreditation of WEA work, questions whether the traditional student and the credit-seeker can be accommodated in the same class, or whether separate classes should be provided. Would extra training for tutors be required, and will there be additional costs? What are the quality control issues? There is already experience in Britain in the accreditation of university liberal adult education and this should be more widely drawn on in today's debate. Many universities run a Certificate Programme. Exeter University, for example, started its programme in 1977/78 with one course and 50 students and in 1991/92 ran 26 courses with 484 students. These courses are open entry, run normally for one evening a week over two years, and students decide whether to enter for assessment for the Certificate in the last term. In some Certificates most students choose to be assessed, but in others only a minority do. So for some years universities such as Exeter have been grappling with the questions posed by Val Selkirk and others. As both the WEA and university departments of continuing education agonise as to whether to accredit their traditional 'extramural' work, more research needs to be done with this existing group of accredited courses so that decisions made are informed ones.

It seems likely that accreditation of liberal adult education will happen, perhaps to some but not all of the provision. The Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education (UCACE), at the meeting of its Standing Committee on Liberal Adult Education in October 1991, considered the principles and practice of accreditation. It was generally agreed that the values of the 'Great Tradition' could be reconciled with modern approaches to the assessment of learning. This paper will end by considering the often and still heard plea for the traditional view of liberal education as learning for its own sake and as education for life, not education for work. Wonderful as these phrases sound, encapsulated in them is the elitism and exclusivity of much of the liberal adult education tradition. Many in these times of recession and unemployment might envy those in the position to study solely for the joy of it. One of the hard facts about liberal adult education is that it has never attracted even a substantial minority of the population. Offering credit may attract into liberal adult education those students that it has traditionally been so hard to recruit. The success of Access work in attracting non-traditional groups would seem to support this argument.

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III NEW APPROACHES, NEW QUESTIONS

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN JAPAN

Kazuyo Yamamoto

I begin by presenting some general information about girls' and women's formal education in Japan. After the Second World War, equal opportunity for higher education was provided to women. In 1990, 37% of women entered junior colleges (average two years) and universities, one per cent higher than men at 36%. But only 15% of women entered universities; the others go to junior colleges. At university, a large number of women students major in humanities, social science, education and teacher training. In junior colleges they major in home economics, also humanities, education and teacher training. Men students choose different majors from women students.

The Ministry of Education is working to ensure that all levels of school education from primary through lower and upper secondary schools give students an understanding of the equality of men and women and of mutual cooperation between the sexes. The Ministry of Education is also making efforts to develop guidance programs that do not discriminate between men and women, and that enable students to select courses in accordance with their own abilities and future prospects. With regard to the subject of home economics, industrial arts like electricity, carpentry and home-making, the Ministry recognises the need for an appropriate response to changes in the social environment surrounding the family, in order to give all students the requisite knowledge and skills to manage their lives in society, and to enable men and women to build a cooperative family life. To this end a new Course of Study was announced in 1989 that aimed at improving both contents and methods. The new Course of Study will be in full effect in lower secondary schools starting in April 1993, and in upper secondary schools starting in April 1994.

Social education is promoted by the local governments of cities, towns and villages to provide young and adult men and women with learning opportunities to promote a mutual understanding of the equality of the sexes and cooperation between them with a view to facilitating joint participation in society. Women's organisations also play an important part in this.

In Japan, as in Britain, women have many roles – housewives, mothers, workers and citizens. Consequently they have a variety of learning needs. Women's needs for both a higher quantity and a higher quality of study are expanding much more rapidly than men's. The learning activities for women are vigorously conducted in women's classes, parent education classes, adult education classes and youth classes held in public halls. Some pioneering and model classes are subsidized by the Ministry of Education.

Women's classes, which started in 1954, are aimed at solving problems relating to women's daily lives. Almost one and a third million women participated in these classes in 1989. The classes include Civic Life, Local History and Cultural Assets, Volunteer Activities, Consumer Education, Women's Issues and Women's History, Family Life Planning, Home Education, Gymnastics and Recreation, Health Care,

Working Life, Hobbies and so on. Since 1978 more emphasis has been placed on Women's Issues and Women's History. Progress can also be seen in the area of Women's Studies, which aims at promoting solutions to women's problems and creating a society in which men and women can enjoy equally enriched lives. These classes are intended to improve people's awareness of equality between men and women and to change stereotyped sex roles – ideas such as "men should go to work and women should stay at home".

A 1987 survey found that 37% of women asked this answered "agree", 29% "disagree", others "cannot say either way". To learn why women have passive attitudes and how to overcome stereotypical sex roles, it is necessary to consider historical factors. Traditionally, Japanese women had a passive attitude and expected to obey their fathers and their husbands. It was and still is difficult for them to express their own opinions confidently.

Adult Education Classes and Parent Education Classes are open not only to women but also to men nowadays. Adult Education Classes meet the various study needs of citizens in the community and offer a variety of subjects and courses for adults ranging from flower arrangement, cooking, athletics to understanding leading edge technology, international relations and the advanced information society. Parent Education Classes are designed for parents with babies and young children, newly married men and women, pregnant women, and working parents, including two-income families. They provide individuals with opportunities to learn how to manage family life and coordinate work and child raising, not only through classes but through an advisory service by telephone or correspondence.

Let us now turn to some recent and important aspects of Adult Education for women. In Japan most university and college graduates find work but after a few years a large number of them discontinue their participation in the labour force during the child-rearing period. When their children grow older it is difficult for women to return to the work they did previously, as there is a gap in their employment record. Besides, in many cases, their husbands have had to move to another city to work at a different branch of their company, so their wives cannot return to their former work. A majority of women can find only part-time, unskilled work which is poorly paid and lacking in job satisfaction. Even women with professional qualifications such as teaching find it very difficult to return to work. However, the situation is gradually improving. In 1986, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was established.

The most important reason for the problem is that many women lose confidence in their own abilities and lack communication skills while they are preoccupied with domestic affairs during the child-rearing period. So many educated Japanese women give up the struggle to find a worthwhile occupation. They need to brush up on their skills and, more importantly, to gain self-confidence. In the field of adult education, we in Japan are trying to come to terms with this problem.

The situation for men in Japan is very different. During their working life many men work long hours – from 8 am until 6 or 7 pm, some even longer. Their lives are centred on work and they tend to neglect their wives and family. The Japanese way

of life makes it very difficult for men to be more than nominally involved in family life and community life.

In Japan, the average retirement age for men is 60, but the average life-span of the Japanese is extending. In 1992, it is over 82 years for women and 76 years for men. Pre-retirement classes have started recently in Japan. This is a very difficult time of adjustment. For men whose lives have been centred on work and their colleagues at work, their social life with those colleagues presents a challenge to adult education. Retired men suddenly find that they have to inhabit the unfamiliar worlds of home and community, whose habits and customs are hardly known to them. They know nothing of domestic routines, shopping and neighbours. Because of rising self-awareness, their wives find it impossible to tolerate the new situation which comes about through their husbands' retirement. They do not want to go on living with husbands who are at home all day but are not prepared to help with domestic chores or cooperate in other ways. Out of their frustration and irritation, some Japanese wives call their husbands "rubbish".

The rate of divorce has been very low in Japan, but it is gradually increasing particularly between the ages of 50 to 60. I think women have a responsibility to men however because women's consciousness and attitudes are still somewhat traditional. For example, sometimes wives want their husbands to work hard to get more money. It is possible for husbands and wives both to reach an understanding of one another's problems. If they could attend classes together it would be helpful.

Men and women should respect each other and share responsibilities for the household, child-caring also income-earning. It is important that adult educators try to help this process of adjustment.

Very recently, several Life-long Learning Courses for Women, "The Women's Lifelong College", were set up in cooperation with higher education institutions such as universities and junior colleges to offer a variety of courses on women's studies, development of managerial skills, international understanding, methods of life-long learning etc. I would like to explain "The Women's Life-long College" of Japan Women's University which was held through 1989 to 1991. The Board of Education in Kawasaki, a well-known industrial city near Tokyo, and the University cooperated to utilise mutual human resources and facilities. The objectives of the course were to promote life-long learning to respond to the diversity of women's learning needs, especially self-awareness, communication skills, life review, citizenship, family life and social life. It was a training course for women leaders to facilitate learning activities in the community. The theme is "lifeology" - the study of women's place in society. We looked at philosophy based on daily lives and the community, women live in. Methods used were discussion, observation, interviews, visits, symposium, lectures, etc. The students were divided into small groups for discussion and field-work in which the students went out into the community and made their own observations. For example, they looked at a particular area popular with the elderly because there were cheap shops and restaurants, and a small temple. They observed the attitudes, conversations and way of life of those elderly people. Also they looked at the child care and day nurseries, or at waste disposal which is often a problem in Japan.

In lifeology, these observations and interactions with the community were used as a basis for improving or reviewing their own lives. For example, when they visited nursing homes for the elderly, they talked to them about their lives. Students tried to understand elderly people's problems and then when they returned to the discussion groups, they began to relate what they observed to their own lives and to understand how to plan for their own old age. Lectures were given on general aspects of women's history. Then the students looked at the history of women in their own families – their grandmothers, mothers and themselves. They found three different generations of women and they made a comparison with the social history of those times. Thus they began to have more understanding at a personal level of how the situation of women is affected by society.

Practical and vocational education are important for women. However, liberal education such as history, literature, philosophy and for some the social sciences is also important for Japanese women. The curriculum of Women's Life-long College treated issues which women face in their daily lives, but at the same time, the courses also incorporated concepts and principles of liberal education like philosophy, history and social sciences. The combined study of practical subjects and liberal arts which the Women's Life-long College aimed at originated from the tradition of its educational sponsor, the Japan Women's University.

This University was established in April 1901 as a liberal arts college for women, the first of its kind in Japan. It aims at the spiritual and intellectual development of women, and endeavours to foster in each student a deep consciousness of great responsibility as a person, as a women, and as a member of the nation. The founder put special emphasis on his philosophy of education, expressed as "True Conviction", "Creativity" and "Cooperation and Service". These are the three principles of education at the University, and have been aimed at by all his successors. These are surely sound principles for liberal education for women even today. To achieve the ideal of educating the whole personality, the founder of Japan Women's University established as its basis a system encompassing all levels of education from kindergarten and primary school to university, under consistent educational principles.

11 LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

Athalinda McIntosh

Introduction

Liberal adult education has traditionally been associated with non-vocational activities in which people of like mind come together to share values and generally extend their knowledge. In these days of accountability and academic audit, however, there is increasing pressure on those involved with liberal education to provide a justification for education for its own sake, to show how it can be assessed and evaluated.

What form can the data take? For my university extra-mural work, I use educational contracts and written feedback from students to evaluate courses. I also have records of students who have returned to classes and/or gone on to first and second degrees or professional training, having been motivated from attending a class that I have led.

As for the academic content and the methods used for a class, an extra-mural tutor is faced with the problem of how to justify both of these aspects without necessarily using traditional methods such as examinations. For her dual role she is evaluated for keeping up with the developments in the subject area she teaches and is expected to know about the general study of the education of adults. I find that 'subject-based' academics are interested in what I teach whereas educationalists are more interested in the why and the how.

Quality is an essential ingredient of any form of evaluation. Tribble (1982:56) finds quality in higher education an elusive subject: quality, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Specific course outcomes are basic to evaluation, but how can we capture the essence of liberal adult education by attempting to translate the quality of the experience into a quantifiable form? In the past adult education, including university extra-mural education, has often been considered either as remedial, for people who need to compensate for lack of earlier learning opportunities, or as leisure activity for those without anything else to do. Increasingly, however, it is being viewed as a continuing process for those who want it, "guided by an overriding goal of improving the quality of life of those involved" (Carrelli, 1976). One of the strengths of liberal adult education is that it can be used creatively and spontaneously to enhance the lives of its participants.

A traditional way that academic quality is measured is through the written word. This paper describes the dynamics of the process of writing a book as part of an extra-mural class (McIntosh, 1992). The subject matter of the book is depression. It resulted from my running the class as a peer learning community (PLC).

With the production of this book I hope to show that a university liberal adult education class can be assessed in the same way as other academic endeavour. The difference is that the outcome of the former, when a PLC format is used, is a collaborative effort in which participants are given credit for the contributions that they make to the exercise.

In terms of a curriculum development model or framework for adult education activities, a PLC provides a Structural, Functional Framework, as suggested by Houle and summarised in Langenbach (1988:179–191), for practice. Following such a framework – referred to by Houle as a Generic Curriculum Model, the process of the adult education programme in this instance consists of activities in which individuals and a group of individuals identify an outcome for a mass audience.

Context of the Study

The setting

The idea for a publication on depression came from the members of a University of Surrey Extra–mural Psychology group at the Spelthorne Institute of Adult Education in Staines, Middlesex, England, who have contributed accounts of their own experiences to it. For the year in which the book was conceived, the students had chosen the subject of **depression** to study. The process by which they made their choice is shown below. The book is the outcome of what we studied in class and the suggestions shared.

The students

University extra–mural students are adults who sign for classes to study subjects, for example psychology, at university level. They are those to whom liberal adult education principles have traditionally been directed. The classes are not necessarily or usually held at a university. More commonly they are held in Local Authority premises, such as the Oast House in Staines, where this one was based.

Unlike usual university classes, extra–mural classes are comprehensive in that they have open entry (McIntosh, 1982:155). Anyone interested who can afford the fees can join. The students are not necessarily representative of the general population.

If statistics and research are to be believed, however, depression is a widespread debilitating condition. The students and I hoped, therefore, that what we wrote about our experiences of depression would be meaningful to a wide range of people consistent with the Houle curriculum module referred to above.

The course had been advertised as an advanced course in Applied Psychology because many students from the previous year's class at Spelthorne had declared an interest in returning. All had, therefore, already studied psychology for at leat one academic year, some for several years. Many had previously studied with me and were accustomed to being involved in class participation in different ways. I routinely use participative approaches in the classes I teach.

I put it to the students at the beginning of the course that I would like it to run as a peer learning community (PLC). Although at that stage they did not know what a PLC was, they were prepared "to give it a try".

A Peer Learning Community

A PLC occurs where the members of a group decide the way a class develops via its content and structure. The tutor, although part of the group, has for all purposes an enabling or management role to aid the students to achieve what they set out to do, or to help them revise their direction if their aims do not appear achievable in the time available.

A PLC begins with an assumption that each of its members is self-directing, and the course is a means for enhancing that competence. It is also based on the notion that what each person brings to the learning community has equal value: the opinions and experiences of each member are considered of equal worth. The course design in a PLC is fully consultative, and a programme therefore emerges to which each person in the group can become committed because it represents in some measure each person's viewpoint.

In a PLC, tutors and students can contribute to, or intervene in, the course progress whenever they feel it necessary to do so. The following ideas of what participants need to agree are proposed by John Heron (1974:1) as being basic to the concept of a peer learning community. To fulfil the criteria, the students were invited by me to be self-directing in:

a) determining the objectives for a course

b) setting and agreeing ways of achieving those objectives

c) monitoring, evaluating, and where appropriate modifying their own performance.

Among the practical considerations to evaluate a PLC, Heron (1974:3) suggests that class members can design a collective task. The point of the task is to evaluate and monitor the awareness and competence of the group and the individuals who constitute the group. As the course progressed, after a number of relevant 'happenings' (see below), the students decided their own task – to put together their own coursework for a book.

Setting the agenda

The class set their own agenda as follows.

So that students would not be influenced by any formal discussion or tutor input before mentioning a PLC I asked them at the beginning of the first class to make a note, without reference to anyone else, as to what subject each would like to study.

When topics were shared, more than half of the group had written down "depression" as their chosen subject, whilst the rest indicated that they would be interested in acquiring some sort of competency for self-evaluation and/or problem-solving in their everyday lives. Among the reasons that many gave for wanting to study depression

was that they had been depressed themselves and were anxious to avoid finding themselves in the same state again.

From this exercise the course structure and content were formulated. The result was a range of discussions and exercises to do with depression and what is meant by "coping with life". My role as a tutor was to help with the theoretical aspects. Each week, two students, in turns, wrote up the "proceedings" for the week, to keep a record of the activities and content.

Events which led to the book

Just before Christmas a friend of one of the students committed suicide. The event provoked a great deal of discussion about how people cope with life, especially when they are feeling so low as to want to take their own life.

At about the same time a programme about depression called "Portrait in Blue" was shown on BBC television. It focused on depression as an illness with a genetic predisposition. The students felt very strongly that it presented a biased, one-sided, and pessimistic view of depression. They wondered how such a programme could possibly help someone who was depressed and perhaps considering suicide.

Some of the students, as part of the course, had already begun to read that illness is only one explanation of depression. The 'illness' explanation has in fact been increasingly questioned by a number of writers. Students who saw it thought that the programme ignored some of the general social and psychological aspects of depression which they felt had influenced their own depression. They were so concerned that together they wrote a letter to the producer of the programme expressing their concern.

The producer responded and in due course visited the class, bringing with him a friend who supported the contentions of the programme both theoretically and practically. This friend felt that the programme provided an adequate explanation for his own depression. There was, therefore, a lively exchange of views. The debate mainly revolved around what means are available, other than medication, to help those who are depressed.

After that session the students were determined to consider how they could make a public contribution to the debate about coping with depression and life in general. They began to consider if, and how, they could use the notes that they were writing in the classes to help others; notes about the strategies they were using and had used to help them in their own lives. Those who had been depressed themselves had been drawing on that experience. Others wrote about their strategies for coping generally.

Additional rationale for the book

In my role as a teacher of university extra-mural classes I have taught a whole range of students from education, medicine and social work among other groups dealing with depressed people. I previously worked for the National Health Service as a Chartered

Clinical Psychologist and have had extensive experience of individuals who are depressed. I have noticed that there seems to be a paucity of literature on depression which is practical but, at the same time, not depressing in itself.

Comments heard from students generally and from those involved in this exercise, about books on depression include:

* They are too academic and are therefore not "available" to people in general

* They sound too easy, but make me feel inadequate, when I am following them and nothing happens

* Case studies on their own get too tedious to read

* Books on depression are generally depressing.

When the students made their decision to address these issues it seemed to me that liberal adult education was functioning at its ultimate level, in the sense that they were ready to 'go public' to share their knowledge and skills, and to be evaluated by people generally for their energy and effort.

The quantifiable outcome for the course generally, rather than of the individuals in it, was to produce a book which:

* is readable and interesting to professionals and anyone wanting to know something about depression

* provides an outline of some non-medical theories of depression and ways of dealing with it

* would use real examples of people's experiences both of depression and coping, so that readers have an opportunity to identify with, and act on, the ideas offered

* is optimistic in the sense that the book is written on the premise that anyone who is depressed can do something about it if offered an opportunity to do so.

Rowe (1988:341) writes that books on depression are rarely enlightening. it was hoped that in sharing the experiences of the students and myself, this book might help depressed people, and those who deal at a personal and professional level with depressed people, to gain some enlightenment.

Role of the tutor

How to play a facilitative role is of interest here. Students have to have a high level of participation in the class, and in their own learning. There is a growing body of

evidence that students who become involved in their own learning begin to seek knowledge rather than wait for it to be fed to them. An old-fashioned view of formal education sees a teacher as the expert and source of knowledge, and students as passive recipients of it.

As shown earlier, a PLC tutor has a multiplicity of roles over and above that of teacher. Hodgson and Reynolds (1987:147) in their description of a learning community identified the role of tutor as course designer and facilitator. Within those two roles I see my role as a class manager, to include keeping the class in 'focus' and acting as a continuity person.

When the official course time finished, I agreed to complete the write-up of the book. We had student 'book meetings' to monitor the progress, for proof-reading material, etc. One of the students typed all of the early drafts and taught me how to use a word-processor - another example of collaboration.

Participation and relevance

Students learn more readily when confronted by issues that have meaning and relevance to them. The students who wrote the material for this book identified, as part of a class exercise, some aspects of what makes learning meaningful to them.

One of the students put the following ideas together, after a group exercise:

* learning a life-long process!
* an interesting subject that provides intellectual stimulus, broadens outlook, opens doors to new experience, deepens understanding, enriches my life
* content that is relevant to my own experience; being able to apply, to put into practice and to use experience in a more skilful way
* a sense of achievement (inside, outside) an increase in self-esteem
* helps to identify my own strengths and weaknesses
* enjoyment, fun
* participation in class activity, learning to think for myself, to question
* a shared experience, seeing others as a resource (including the teacher!).

These themes are fundamental to both the summative and the formative evaluation processes of any adult education programme, but in a PLC individuals have to make an effort in a collaborative task to be very specific about how they can meet their own needs without subjugating them to group pressure. One way that the students in this

group interpreted their needs was in the use of biographical data.

Writing this book has been a learning experience in these terms for all involved in its compilation, especially as it is based on our own experiences. How will it be publicly evaluated and by whom? I now look at some of the features of evaluation suggested by Fellenz et al (1982:342–345) for adult education programmes.

Evaluation

Were aims and objectives met?

My objective to evaluate the process of a PLC in the context of a university liberal adult education course was met beyond the bounds that I had set at its outset. The objectives of the students as a group did not become clear until some time into the course, after a series of events which appeared to mobilize their affective experience into a stated projected behaviour. Boud (1987:229) in his studies of adult learners says that goals may change as a result of continuing events that learners experience.

What about external evaluation?

I began by referring to public accountability and to the inherent worth of liberal adult education. The book referred to in this paper has taken two years to write. It is neither necessary nor realistic to go to such a length to receive credibility. Nevertheless, unless those involved with liberal adult education do write up for public consumption what they are doing, in current economic conditions, such adult education will not be given the recognition it deserves. Whether the book itself is seen as an accepted academic measure of worth only time will tell.

In my introduction I referred to the problem of knowing who may be interested in what we write and to whom to address our material. Throughout this class, the process of the PLC and the decisions about the way the group developed were discussed as part of the content of the course. Under pressure from the students I omitted a lengthy preface to the book in its final draft form describing that process. Their judgement was that the book would sell on its psychological content.

That 'discarded' preface forms the basis for this paper.

Evaluating learning experiences

Did the PLC provide learning experiences for anyone interested in it? Those experiences are too long and complex to list here. As mentioned earlier, I learned and am continuing to learn a great deal from running the PLC course. Since the course finished, the students have formed a Sunday 'Psycho-group' to discuss academic issues and their relevance to them. They have an open access through people they have met in other classes and elsewhere. Occasionally I attend as their guest and can see examples of how they are reinforcing and extending their learning and skills. There are many examples of major life changes, again too numerous to quote here.

I hope however that I have provided some reminders to those in liberal adult education of how traditional academic methods to evaluate courses and projects can be used in conjunction with the course participants for public scrutiny. Contemporary notions of student participation and satisfaction are highlighted in a collaborative learning environment such as a PLC In summary, I have identified the increasing demand for public evaluation of liberal adult education programmes. I have shown through the medium of a peer group learning community how traditional methods of evaluation can emerge.

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12

ADULT EDUCATION FROM BELOW
NOTES FROM A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Michael Schratz

The *Olympisches Dorf* (Olympic Village) is a suburban housing estate which in its social structure and architecture deviates from all the other districts of Innsbruck, a city usually well-known by tourists for its Alpine scenery. This strangeness goes back to two Olympic Winter Games (1964 and 1976) when suddenly housing for the athletes, journalists and support staff was needed at short notice. Each time a couple of new multi-storey buildings had to be built outside Innsbruck. After the sports events the buildings were given away under a publicly assisted housing scheme in order to ease the shortage of housing in the predominantly touristic area. However, the infrastructure for living there continuously was not given, as for athletes and support staff it was not necessary.

After the *Olympisches Dorf* had been populated by great numbers of people in need of housing, it soon became known as a socially neglected district of Innsbruck and has kept its negative image ever since. The array of multi-storey buildings, the high population density, the damage and criminal cases occurring there more often than anywhere else in the region make this district a living quarter which people try to move away from as soon as they can afford to. As a consequence, the suburban housing estate is mainly inhabited by lower income families with many children or single parent families and others who cannot afford living elsewhere in the touristic region. The few green areas around the housing estate are not meant to be used by children, for whom there are not enough playing grounds available, most of which give a very sterile impression. There is a youth centre available, but it is far too small to serve all the young people, and there are very few other areas for face-to-face communication among people living there.

After a couple of schools had been opened at the *Olympisches Dorf* to offer education on primary and lower secondary level, adult education institutions soon saw a need to open district branches. When they started to attract the local inhabitants to attend activities offered through different kinds of evening classes, they only reached a small number of people in the area. The conventional curricular offerings could only reach those interests which were of more general concern, such as foreign languages for holidays abroad coming up or craftwork in certain hobby areas. In order to find out more about the needs and interest of the local community, a conventional questionnaire was sent out, which brought about little change because new courses advertised as a result of the questionnaire results failed to attract a greater audience and therefore had to be cancelled.

Participation doesn't come easily

After discussing the local situation informally a research project was initiated among members of the local Volkshochschule (Folk High School), a representative of the regional adult education office and faculty and students from the University of Innsbruck, which was expected to find out more about the local inhabitants' needs,

worries and interests. Since this could not be done in a reasonable way without making use of the potential of the people living in the area, we decided on a *participatory action research* project which would allow local community members to participate actively in this project. According to Whyte, Greenwood & Lazes (1991,20) participatory action research (PAR)

> thus contrasts sharply with the conventional model of pure research, in which members of organizations and communities are treated as passive subjects, with some of them participating only to the extent of authorizing the project, being its subjects, and receiving the results. PAR is *applied* research, but it also contrasts sharply with the most common type of applied research, in which researchers serve as professional experts, designing the project, gathering the data, interpreting the findings, and recommending action to the client organization. Like the conventional model of pure research, this also is an elitist model of research relationships. In PAR, some of the members of the organization we study are actively engaged in the quest for information and ideas to guide their future actions.

We had previously heard of the Highlander Folk School, later renamed Highlander Research and Education Center, which has been known as a catalyst for educational change through active participation in the South of the US (cf Horton, 1990, and Bell et al., 1990). Apart from that we had known action research in its more institutionalised version, where it is "simply a form of self–reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out." (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, 162) Action research concepts have mainly been employed in the context of classroom research (Altrichter and Posch, 1990; Gregory, 1988; Hustler, Cassidy and Cuff, 1986; McKernan, 1988; Oldroyd and Tiller, 1987), teacher training (Elliott, in press; Goswami and Stillman, 1986) and higher education (Cross and Angelo, 1988, Schratz, 1990 and 1992). Although action research "is sweeping through faculties of education in universities across the world" (Elliott, in press), this concept is still not very common in the context of adult education. Therefore I want to introduce some of the key principles, which can help in understanding the broader context of critical enquiry in adult education. McTaggart (1991) sketches out the following principles for participatory action research:

- *Identification of the individual and collective project:* Individuals not only try to improve their own work but also help others improve their work so that the possibility for a more broadly informed project is created.

- *Changing and studying discourse, practice and social organisation - The distribution of power:* Language which carries the communicative potential, and the patterns of interaction, formed by the activities and practices of the group, are related to the social context in which they occur. Therefore professional identity is formed through the institutional culture and the power relationship among its members.

- *Changing the culture of working groups, institutions and society:* The improvement of the situation of individuals in an organisational structure works towards change on a more global level within the institution and in society at large.

- *Action and reflection:* Action research develops through the self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning and so on. (For a more detailed description see Kemmis & McTaggart, 1990)

- *Unifying the intellectual and practical project:* Participatory action research involves a systematic learning process which uses intelligence to inform action, with a view towards an improvement of practical projects the participants are involved in.

- *Knowledge production:* the work in the action research group results in the shared understanding of its members. The knowledge development through reflective practice and mutual discussion is directed towards the improvement of the social situation they are in.

- *Engaging the politics of research action:* Participatory action research is a political process in so far as individual changes will also affect others. By critically analysing the work situation participants act politically towards overcoming accepted practices of the institution.

- *Methodological resources:* Various research methods can be utilised for the work through the self-reflective cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. They reach from simple forms of data collection to more elaborate, demanding methods of investigation.

- *Creating the theory of the work:* Action research asks for critical reflection and justification of the educational work of its participants (cf. Schratz, in press).

From theory to practice

Putting theory into practice for everybody involved meant to identify with the individual and collective project and to find a culture of working together among people with different backgrounds. Previous experiences had shown that it was crucial to start collective work off with an extensive orientation phase which was geared towards the identification of the individual in collective work. This beginning stage took place at a weekend and mainly dealt with the individual team members' motives and interests in the project. This should pave the way for the collective project which was confronted with the first problem: how to get there.

(a) Entering the field

Finding a social trail into the local community as a 'professional stranger' (Agar, 1980)

was a great challenge, which we started with in-depth interviews through a network of people who had been referred to us by colleagues, friends or acquaintances. In order to get to the personal needs and interests of the inhabitants of the local community as closely as possible, the interviews were conducted in their private homes so as to give them the chance to be at ease with their everyday setting. The research method of an interview was not chosen to get answers to pre-set questions, "nor to test hypotheses, and not to 'evaluate' as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." (Seidman, 1991, 3)

For the project team members who all lived outside the *Olympisches Dorf*, this was a first chance to get to know people of the area in their everyday-living context with kids interrupting, pets running about and other 'disturbances' occurring. Only through these on-the-site encounters was it possible to grasp what it means to live in the ghetto-like situation. This made clear that educational interests lie at the bottom of the list of the people's personal needs. Moreover, details became apparent which showed the often unknown fears of entering an adult educational institution, as the following extract shows convincingly (1):

> *... and how this works with the Volkshochschule and such..., no, I'm afraid of going there. I have inhibitions, you know, if I get there as an old woman ... Actually under Volkshochschule (2) one thinks of something higher, somebody like us, at least, you know. I'm really not sure ...*

This statement clearly addresses the problems traditional adult education institutions have in reaching their (potential) clientele. They have to rethink their programme planning which offers conventional curricula whose ideology of evaluation is restricted to ticking off the course objectives that have been met without asking whether they are of any use for the people 'addressed'. What happens in such a case with somebody

who is not happy with his or her present situation, who wants to learn in the sense of 'changing', who wants to gain new experience which apparently was not possible in school with its traditional curricula because it did not attract the students to bring in their own life experience? In such an understanding of education the individual (potential) participant remains the addressee of an operationalised 'standard' population, who is either attracted by the programmes offered or not.

Therefore the project group thought it important to get as closely involved as possible with the local inhabitants. The 'interview data' gave the first orientation of the situation seen through the eyes of the people who live in the *Olympisches Dorf*. Through the personal contact with the interviewees it was also possible to establish some sort of trust, which helped in getting a number of people interested in the participatory action research project.

(b) From critique to action

As a first step a 'future workshop' was organized, which its originators call a "new and necessary initiative for the enrichment of democracy and revival of interest in the community" (Jungk and Müllert, 1987, 9). It took place in a local restaurant and – according to the model – consisted of the following three workshop phases, which helped in structuring the involvement of the citizens towards a concretization of a participatory action research project.

i) The *critique phase*, which took stock of the negative experiences, worries and discontent relating to the situation at the *Olympisches Dorf*. The statements collected on index cards were then amalgamated into several thematic areas.

ii) In the *fantasy phase* everybody was encouraged to come up with ideas, desires and alternative views which could also be of an utopian nature.

iii) In the *implantation phase* the participants were asked to critically assess the ideas from (ii) with a view towards concrete projects to be followed up in the community.

As a result of this workshop three thematic areas were decided on to be implemented through an action plan: the housing situation; communication and community; family and education. Although these topics could have been dealt with in conventional evening classes, different strategies were developed to involve some of the inhabitants in the process. Each topic was dealt with in a different way, as in the following 'project tree' of Achleitner et. al. (1988, p. 86) with the three thematic areas branching off from the tree trunk representing the first meeting at the future workshop.

Since it is not possible to describe and deal with all aspects of the extensive tree structure in this paper, I want to highlight some of the aspects which seem relevant for further discussions in developing educational activities from below.

(c) Activation through interaction

Living at a place one "loves to hate" seemed to be a motto which came up again and again in both the initial interviews and the future workshop. It also appeared to be an overall topic covering the three thematic areas arising from the latter. Therefore it was decided to take a closer look at what constitutes this love-hate relationship. Such an undertaking was difficult to organise because it was necessary to find a time slot where people had and took time to discuss their situation in greater detail. This space was found in the waiting rooms of the local physicians and veterinarians. As a discussion stimulus a short video recording was produced which showed the living situation with a family and their children in one of the multi-storey buildings.

Although this approach was time-consuming it enhanced lively discussions among the people in the waiting rooms and the members of the project team. Since people had to wait there anyway, they did not feel under the usual pressure of everyday activities. Moreover, they were happy to be actively involved with something, which made the waiting time a worthwhile event. In some sense, for most of them this experience became an educational experience in itself. Apart from personal issues one particular topic came up again and again in the discussions: keeping pets in blocks of flats and in the restricted area around the buildings. It soon became clear that this asked for a greater audience and further discussions. As a consequence, a special event was planned which was thematically oriented towards pet-keeping at the *Olympisches Dorf*.

(d) Pets get people together

The local secondary school was chosen for the event to take place, since it also served as the home of the regional *Volkshochschule* in the evenings. In contrast to the traditional situation, however, during the meeting the whole school building was taken over by the participants as in a community centre, which had never been the case there before(3). Children, younger and older people and even different kinds of pets entered the open house and created an activity usually not known in the sterile school building. (Nobody apart from the caretaker seemed to bother about the official rule that animals are not allowed in school buildings.) Adults attended discussion

groups, children played with the animals and young people made a video recording.

The formal and informal discussions brought to light that pets suffered in the same way from the living situation as the people in the *Olympisches Dorf*, as the following extract from one of the discussions suggests.

> *The dogs are just as aggressive as the people are; they are real dogs living in blocks of flats. What they need would be a run, but that's not available and if they arrive at home one is aggressive against the other. If you want to go for a walk along the river Inn, you are busy trying to figure out where to walk by looking out for a safe route. That's neither a pleasure for the dog nor for the people there. That's simply torture. What I did with my dog: I went for two hundred metres,then I turned round with him. I couldn't have survived with both - child and dog. The dog kept pulling and plucking, it just didn't work...*

It was not surprising after all the talking about animals that somebody commented *"There's no room for kids, and pets take the little space available"*. In a final panel discussion representatives from the city council were confronted with harsh criticism by the local community. Although there was no immediate solution to the problem, the participants at the event at least had the chance to negotiate their problems 'first hand' with their political representatives. For the project team it became clear that an on-going discussion seemed necessary to keep up the political pressure.

Looking for a (research) perspective

Similar events like the one dealing with the situation of pet-keeping took place covering other problem areas such as aggression among young people, for which the local youth centre could not offer solutions. As a result of the discussion it became evident that a lot of aggression was caused by the structural violence of the architectural design. Especially women who felt threatened became aware that they needed some training in self-defence, which was soon offered by the local *Volkshochschule* without great bureaucracy and advertised through the local media. Courses of this type were soon filled up and had to be repeated for a number of extra people interested. This and other examples showed that activating forms of adult education from below can help in bridging the gap between community interest and activities that affect their personal lives.

Of course, it was not possible to do away with the violence caused by the bad planning of the city council, which was originally more interested in Olympic honours than its responsibility for the local community. Therefore the project described here often became a political process when individuals with different backgrounds had to get together and work on collective goals. Neither was it possible within the relatively short time available (18 months) to change the discourse practices in a satisfying way, as becomes clear from a team member's observation during one of the meetings: *"Some women were disappointed that they did not see the possibility to bring in their own expectations and desires."* This

experience asks for new ways to develop a new kind of sensitivity that empowers people who are not very eloquent or who are in a minority position, to bring in their own questions, worries and suggestions. In this sense

> participatory research is not just learning; it has knowledge production and action aspects to it, as well as constituting new ways of relating to each other to make the work of reform possible. It is a process of using critical intelligence to inform action, and developing it so that social action becomes *praxis* through which people may consistently live their social values. (McTaggart, 1991,176)

in order to try to satisfy these needs two concrete steps marked the end of the 'formal' project. One was the installation of an on-going working group which should meet on a regular basis in the *Olympisches Dorf* and bridge the gap between subjective experience and social practice in the situation at hand. This group was initiated as a result of the project by a member of the local community who had taken part in the participatory action research process. The second step was an attempt to reflect collectively the socio-dynamics of the group processes throughout the project work. In this phase the original, action-oriented group changed to a self-reflective one. This collective self-reflection, whose methodological steps are described elsewhere (Schratz, in press), turned out to be a challenging attempt to analyse educational research which demonstrates how the psycho-social context is essential to a proper understanding of pedagogical practice. This all too often seems to be neglected in liberal adult education activities.

Notes

(1) The translation of the original German interviews are mine.

(2) *Hochschule* in German is an alternative word for university. The term *Volkshochschule* goes back to the workers' movement in Austria at the turn of the century, when university professors gave special lectures at what was from then on called the *Volkschochschule* (people's university).

(3) In Austria, the concept of a community school is a fairly new one and has hardly been put into practice yet.

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13 **LIFELONG LEARNING A NECESSITY**

Kurt Gestrelius

At a large international conference on lifelong learning held in Esbjerg, Denmark in 1977 a Russian education scientist used the term "longlife learning" in place of "lifelong learning". It was unclear whether this represented a conscious modification of terminology on his part or a linguistic lapse. It would not be difficult, however, to justify the use of a "longlife learning" concept, in view of the enormous importance of learning both for pure survival and for effective action in the modern world.

Lifelong learning, to be sure, is a phenomenon as old as mankind. Human beings have always continued to learn throughout their lives. However, it is during this century that education scientists first focused upon this matter. Thus, as a concept in education, lifelong learning has had a rather short history. Discussions are of course coloured by cultural factors.

Learning, Education And Ideology

In most countries authorities are not interested simply in stimulating and facilitating learning, but also in steering it and in placing demands on individuals regarding what they learn.

Education involves the organised creation of particular learning situations, usually steered by certain goals and with a certain control of the knowledge attained. At the same time, modern education views the learner as being the only part in the educational process for whom being active is a sine qua non. To educate is thus to plan and arrange appropriate conditions for learning, and to stimulate the student through guidance and encouragement.

> Lengrand (1975, p.14) has described adult education in the following way:
>
> ... the most important service of the educator is to provide the student with appropriate tools and to place him in a constructive situation. The student can then, within the framework of his own social situation, everyday experience, efforts, successes and failures build up an own system of knowledge and gradually establish it as an element of his personality.

This is an approach to education conceived as part of an open and democratic society. However, education can be incorporated into any form of ideology and can lend itself to being exploited for enforced education in a repressive and totalitarian system. The central control characterising the education systems of totalitarian states has often led to the opposition placing its trust in informal learning in which the individual determines the direction of learning him or herself. In some countries this has resulted in informal lifelong learning being deemed a subversive activity.

In the preface to Kurt Lewin's book Resolving Social Conflicts (1948) Gordon Allport notes the marked similarities between the works of Lewin and Dewey. Those two

authors agree in maintaining that democracy must be taught anew from generation to generation. Both view democracy, as well, as representing a social pattern that is far more difficult to achieve and maintain than is autocracy. Both consider, in addition, that there is a close relationship between democracy and social psychological research, believing that without insight into the principles of human nature that apply in a group context, democracy cannot be successful. The authors feel that without the freedom in theory formation and research which is attainable in a democratic environment, social science too is unable to succeed.

The realisation of the democratic ideals expressed here depends very much upon the ability of individuals and groups to assess critically their own experience and that of others. One learns of the experience of others through their oral and written statements. The ability to judge the truth content of such statements is part of one's critical powers, as is the ability to comprehend the consequences for oneself and others of various actions. The achievement and refinement of such critical powers is one of the major aims of education.

Lifelong Learning And The Need for Education

The overall aim of education can be seen as being that of developing human competencies. Such competencies relate to various areas of human life. Four areas of human life are often distinguished, those of working life, family life, leisure time and social life.

Working life represents the occupational segment and various activities relating to it. Family life too involves work, but of an unpaid character (shopping, preparing meals, cleaning, house maintenance), together with play and interaction, and child-rearing.

Leisure time represents conditions under which no demands are placed upon the individual. It can involve doing nothing or carrying out various activities. It is difficult with some persons to distinguish leisure time from other areas of life.

Social life consists of contacts with people outside working or family life, sometimes within different organisations.

Although it may not be easy to describe these areas in a fully adequate way, individuals usually have no difficulty in understanding what is meant by them. Problems can arise if one attempts to generalise from the experience of particular individuals to apply to these areas universally.

Working life, family life, social life and leisure time all involve the need for human competencies. From this, specific learning needs arise. The individual's development during various periods of life calls for patterns of adjustment which require continual learning often of an informal, self-directed character. The very participation in the four areas of life named provides a multitude of learning opportunities, as does the utilisation of such public media and facilities as radio, TV, libraries and museums so as to enhance one's competencies.

If lifetime learning is to function well, however, much is required of society. For example, the opportunities for learning which education programs, public media and various public institutions provide should be readily available and possess a richness and variety of content. In order to take advantage of such opportunities and fully to engage in lifetime learning, individuals must also possess certain basic competencies which facilitate learning.

Learning needs and the educational needs which are coupled with them can be conceived in terms of the need for special competencies. Needs of the latter sort vary greatly from one physical and social environment to another. Attempting to satisfy such needs can be seen as representing the will to survive and to maintain control in the current environment and in the various environments with which one might be faced. The respective competencies may be achieved either with the help of formal educational programs or in a self-directed way.

Educational needs can be said to be a function, both of the individual's own subjectively experienced need of learning and of the learning needs prescribed by society. The individual aspect is shown, for example, by the fact that participation in many types of the education that people receive is voluntary, being steered by the individual's subjectively experienced need to learn. There is also a long-established principle in education suggesting that it is as difficult to prevent people from learning what they really want to know as it is to teach them what they have no desire to learn.

Not all subjectively experienced learning needs are accepted, however, as a basis for planning. Such needs may be subjected to a normative evaluation. Also, there are educational needs which society considers the individual to have, even if the individual does not recognise them. When this is the case, society may well establish compulsory education.

This does not mean, of course, that there is always a conflict between the individual's own experienced need of learning and the learning needs which society considers its citizens to have. In fact, many teachers endeavour in obligatory programs of education to base their approach to teaching on the felt needs of the students.

Lifelong Learning And Recurrent Education

The idea of lifelong learning seems to have originated within adult education. A report by a British committee in 1919 concerned with adult education (Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction) described the need for adult education as being both universal and lifelong (Jessup, 1969).

A Center for Continuing Education was founded at the University of Minnesota in 1934 (Dave & Skager, 1976). It propagated the idea that education should not come as a break in people's lives, or represent simply a recapitulation of what had been learned earlier, or serve merely to supplement the latter. Rather, education was to be seen as being permanently in progress. Accordingly, the concept of lifelong learning was to involve not only courses of a regular and formal type, but also more occasional and informal types of learning during work and leisure time, involving conversation,

discussions, radio listening, television watching, newspaper reading, and the like.

The idea of recurrent education, i.e. of the formal establishment of an educational system facilitating lifetime learning, was first presented in an international political context in 1969 by the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme at the Conference of European Ministers of Education in Versailles (Bengtsson, 1976).

Discussions of recurrent education have been concerned with the organisational development of the educational system generally and with associated questions of the labour market, of social policy and of the coordination of education with other aspects of society. Emphasis has been placed in particular on the administrative measures needed for establishing recurrent education.

Recurrent education and lifelong learning represent the same basic idea, although the lifetime learning concept is broader, in that it includes both formal and informal types of learning, and both planned education and more or less random learning. Questions of recurrent education involve questions of the organisational forms to be employed for those parts of lifelong learning which are specifically set up and formalised. Thus viewed, primary and secondary school education, college and university education, labour market training, folk high schools, municipal and private adult education programs, education with the military, and personnel education programs are all encompassed within the concept of recurrent education.

One often hears the comment that recurrent education never comes about. This is in my estimation an incorrect view. Admittedly, the educational institutions just referred to were not originally planned or developed as components of such a preconceived system. Nevertheless, they can indeed be considered to represent components in a loosely structured system of recurrent education. It is surely desirable, nevertheless, to emphasise that within any given part of the total recurrent education system the part in question represents an important component in such a flexible system.

It is clearly important as well that access to various parts of the adult education system be improved. This is particularly true as regards opportunities for those participating to be given appropriate leave of absence from their jobs and to receive the economic support they need.

If lifelong learning is to be more than just a good idea and an ideal, it is important that the social and individual conditions which support it be adequately understood. Lifelong learning requires certain basic knowledge, as well as fundamental attitudes and skills on the part of the individual. In addition, it places definite demands on society and on how the educational system is organised. To the richness and variety of educational content already referred to one can add that this should involve more than simply richness and variety in the basic topics covered and in concrete details of these; the ideological and philosophical perspectives too should be rich and varied. Recruitment activity aimed at stimulating active participation in lifelong learning is another societal measure which can be important here.

To the requirements which lifelong learning places on the individual can also be added the desire to learn, and the readiness and ability to plan, experiment and discover, as well as to cooperate with and be supportive of others in the learning endeavour, and attentiveness to the learning and educational possibilities available.

Self-Directed Learning and Lifelong Learning

In discussions of lifelong learning one sometimes hears it said, though it less frequently appears in writing, that most of what we learn we learn outside of courses. This is partly a matter of what can be called "self-teaching", "self-directed learning" or "self-study" (Borgström, 1986). In self-study in its pure form the student takes all the initiative and responsibility, and does all the planning for the learning which is to take place.

In Sweden, modified forms of self-study involving formal and non-formal types of instruction and learning were established and institutionalised rather early within the folk education movement. Much of the self-study of this sort takes place within study circles characterised by reciprocal learning. This can be considered to represent a form of learning of potentially great importance in promoting lifelong learning. Reciprocal learning involves two or more persons in a group alternating in the respective roles of teacher and student. No one functions as permanent teacher. Each member can take initiative, contribute with information, partake of information, and exercise a certain influence on the material taken up. Often learning occurs spontaneously, with no conscious effort. Reciprocal learning can assume both planned and unplanned forms. Unplanned reciprocal learning may occur, for example, through persons influencing each other in their knowledge and understanding while on a trip, while taking a walk together, and the like. Reciprocal learning of a more planned and formalised character can take place in study circles, in group work, and in conferences and seminars. Such learning places demands upon the ability and readiness of participants to comprehend their own educational needs and those of others in the group, to communicate with one another, to plan together, and to share in enjoyment regarding the group's activities. An important element in reciprocal learning is respect for others and their views (Gestrelius, 1987).

Our knowledge of those forms of self-study which are entirely self-directed is very imperfect, in that it is mainly the organised forms which have been the subject of discussion and investigation. This may perhaps be partly because may adults in search of learning opportunities are primarily interested in improving their vocational qualifications by taking formal courses in areas of relevance. This has perhaps directed interest away from non-formalised, self-directed approaches to learning.

It is important, however, in order to understand adequately problems connected with lifelong learning, that one gain further insight into the various forms of self-directed learning which are practised and into the conditions for their selection and use.

According to Allen Tough (1979) one can compare adult education to an iceberg. The visible portion represents the organized forms of adult education of which we have knowledge on the basis of descriptive statistics and research. Tough estimates that

about 20 per cent of the time adults intentionally devote to the search after knowledge is represented in this visible portion of the iceberg, which implies that some 80 per cent of their intentional search for knowledge does not take place within the framework of organised courses, other forms of learning being involved (Bergström. 1986). One should note that Tough nevertheless considers here only the intentional search for knowledge and not the learning which occurs unintentionally.

Reactions to Tough's conclusions showed that there were educational researchers and educational policymakers who were surprised that the search after knowledge should be so widespread. One should perhaps be astonished instead, however, at the biased conception of the human search for knowledge thus expressed. Tough in fact analysed only more conscious forms of the search for knowledge. An empirical finding which particularly highlights this was that over 90 per cent of persons he interviewed reported carrying out "learning projects", defined as a series of learning activities within a given area involving at least seven hours of time during a half-year period.

In a somewhat similar vein one Swedish investigator considered the question how many persons in a group of adults had displayed a search for knowledge, defined operationally as having spent at least 20 hours during the previous year in efforts on their own to gain knowledge of a subject of which they could also have gained knowledge in a course.

If lifetime learning is to be adequately understood, however, one must conceive of the search after knowledge and of knowledge acquisition in a much broader way. Indeed, people require fresh knowledge continually and the search for knowledge is something shown by everyone.

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14 POSTSCRIPT - THE WADHAM CONVERSATION

Chris Duke

The papers in this volume can be left to speak for themselves. We may ask however what kind of discourse they engendered at the international meeting where they were presented.

First: shared values and the past. It is evident that the sense of common purpose found among British proponents of the liberal tradition extends to other regions and traditions; the contributions of Day and Shimada demonstrate this in different ways, as do others from the European continent and from Australia.

Traditional purpose and provision did not however pass unchallenged. Tom Steele for example argued that the extension and extramural movement became a captive of middle class colonialism, taking on the "colonial project" of sanitising the great unwashed: the liberal notion of citizenship was incomplete, for women were largely limited to caring roles; extramural Englishness largely excluded minority ethnic groups. On the other hand the liberal tutorial class tradition did allow radical intellectuals to work for social change, and there have been examples of innovation in the extramural margin moving into the academic "mainstream" - Cultural Studies for example. Academics, as Steele sees it, should deprofessionalise themselves and become intellectuals; yet intellectuals have passed from being legislators for a new society to being its interpreters - intermediaries in effect for promoting government policies.

There was along with a shared sense of values also a shared sense of crisis. Partly this reflected diminution of resources: what does it mean to talk of choice as a liberal characteristic if there lacked the means to put choice into effect? Beyond this was a common sense that liberal values were out of fashion politically. "Conviction politics" in Britain, economic recession and contraction in public expenditure worldwide, have taken their toll of liberal adult education; liberal purposes survive often by masquerading as vocational preparation or as skills for winning the great international economic competition. More fundamentally still, post-modernism represents a loss of confidence in values and purpose, a decline into relativism which slides into scepticism and cynicism. Between conviction politics and relativist nihilism, liberal adult education has a tough time indeed.

Not surprisingly, much of the discourse was about discourse itself. One way this was expressed was by trying to define the characteristics or dimensions of liberal adult education. Is it identified by subject-matter? By the purpose and intent of provider and/or learner? Or by the process of learning and teaching? Is it quintessentially education for personal development, since all else is if not corrupt at least corruptible? Is the essence choice, or the freedom to challenge?

Another approach is to explore and clarify the antonyms of liberal, the enemies of liberal adult education. A familiar favourite was acknowledged: the ill-named "vocational", or occupation-related, with its connotations of (narrow skill) training. The non-democratic, and non-humanistic, are other obvious candidates.

Other "enemies" are less obvious yet perhaps more powerful. One is the very process of dichotomisation which sets the vocational off against the liberal. Another is the "andragogy" which reduces liberating education to individualistic self-actualisation and adult education to a box of tricks. Another is individualism itself, Trojan horse for a fragmented consumerist social system in which "society" itself has no place. More obvious again is the quest for economic betterment or economic competitiveness which reduces social good to the capacity to produce and to consume more than one's national(istic) neighbours. Nationalism is added to the list. Within one's own society the creation of "megasystems" and the processes of social engineering was identified as another serious threat - especially but by no means only in Japan.

Back within adult education, along with andragogy, a threat is discerned in the sharp competitiveness among providers of adult education for whom winning and holding market share becomes a matter of survival, an institutional end in itself. Apparently, but only apparently, paradoxically, our own sacred past is another enemy to liberal adult education, insofar as it becomes a refuge and shibboleth - a barrier to original thought and to creating new vessels for old values.

Part of the sacred past is the horny-handed student workman of the tutorial class tradition or myth. Easily identified is that contemporary enemy, populist conservatism; less easy to wrestle with is the myth or mystique of "the real people", "the ordinary people", "the real communities", still perhaps "the working classes". If organic intellectuals did not feature in this discussion the problem was there: what and who is the true client of liberal adult education? If the middle classes, with their culture imperialism, their "project of colonialism", are the enemy of radical - liberating and encompassing - adult education, where do we go from here? This, after all, increasingly is the hand that feeds us.

Does such a bewilderment of difficulties and contradictions spell the demise of liberal adult education? This was not the conclusion of the Wadham conversation. Rather, there remains a lot of energy, purpose and optimism about the future: at the three levels of society, of the (continuing) education system, and at the coalface level of the learner-educator encounter.

Wrestling with the language, finding sufficiently relevant and robust means of discourse across national traditions is not always easy, but it remains an essential, and not merely a useful and stimulating, activity. Perhaps like democracy itself the language of liberal adult education has forever to be renewed and reinvented to remain alive. In the end one issue emerges more keenly and clearly than all others: the tension between fundamentalism and relativism.

Absolute certainty - fundamentalism - appears to be the great enemy of liberalism. Yet absolute relativism presents a conundrum central to the identity, role and future of liberal adult education.

In Voltaire's strong sense tolerance (of others' views and values) remains the bedrock of traditional and contemporary liberal faith and belief. It is the enemy neither of liberatory education nor of socio-communal purpose.

In the sense of post-modernist uncertainty about all values leaving no basis for belief and the will to act, relativism can be corrosive of purpose and commitment.

Those in conversation at Wadham asked themselves more than once whether or not it was necessary or useful to continue trying to define what we mean by liberal adult education. The conclusion was resoundingly affirmative: the essential task of liberal adult education is to enable society to sustain a continuing conversation with itself. That conversation is needed today as urgently as ever.

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